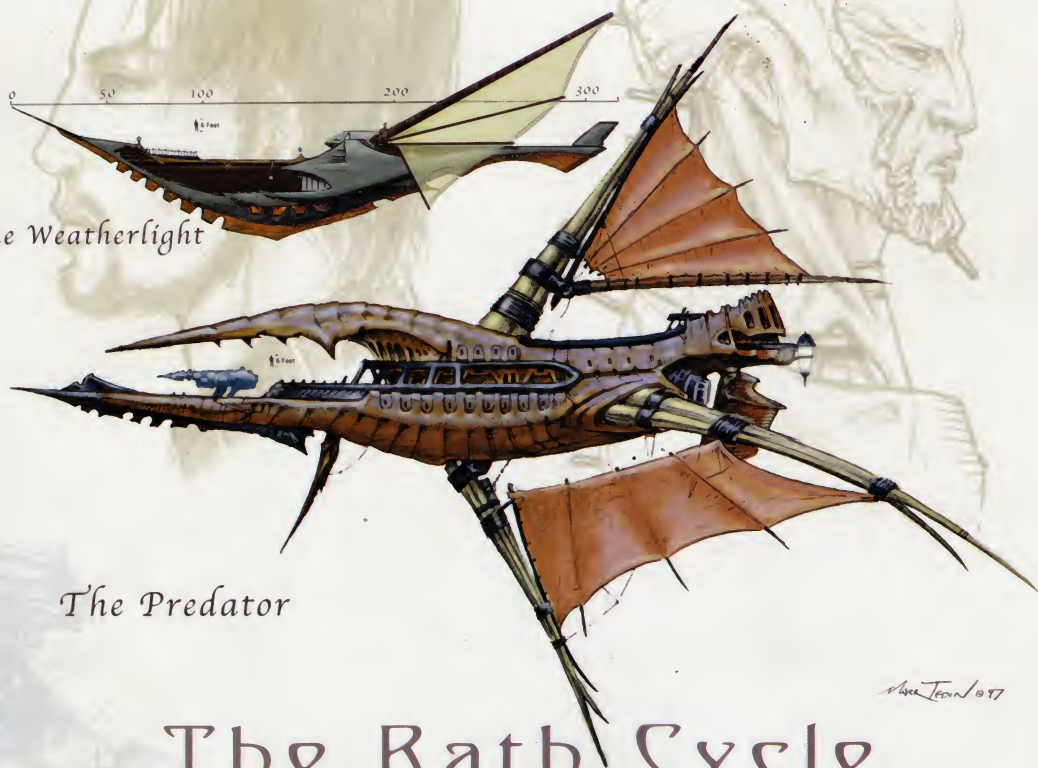


The ART of **MAGIC** The Gathering®



John Tard / 0.97

The Rath Cycle

EDITED BY LIZZ BALDWIN
INTRODUCTION BY RICHARD GARFIELD

THE
ART^{of}
MAGIC[®]

*A Fantasy of
World Building
and the Art of
The Rath Cycle[™]*



INTRODUCTION BY RICHARD GARFIELD
TEXT BY ANTHONY WATERS &
EDITED BY LIZZ BALDWIN

THE
ART *of*
MAGIC

The Rath Cycle

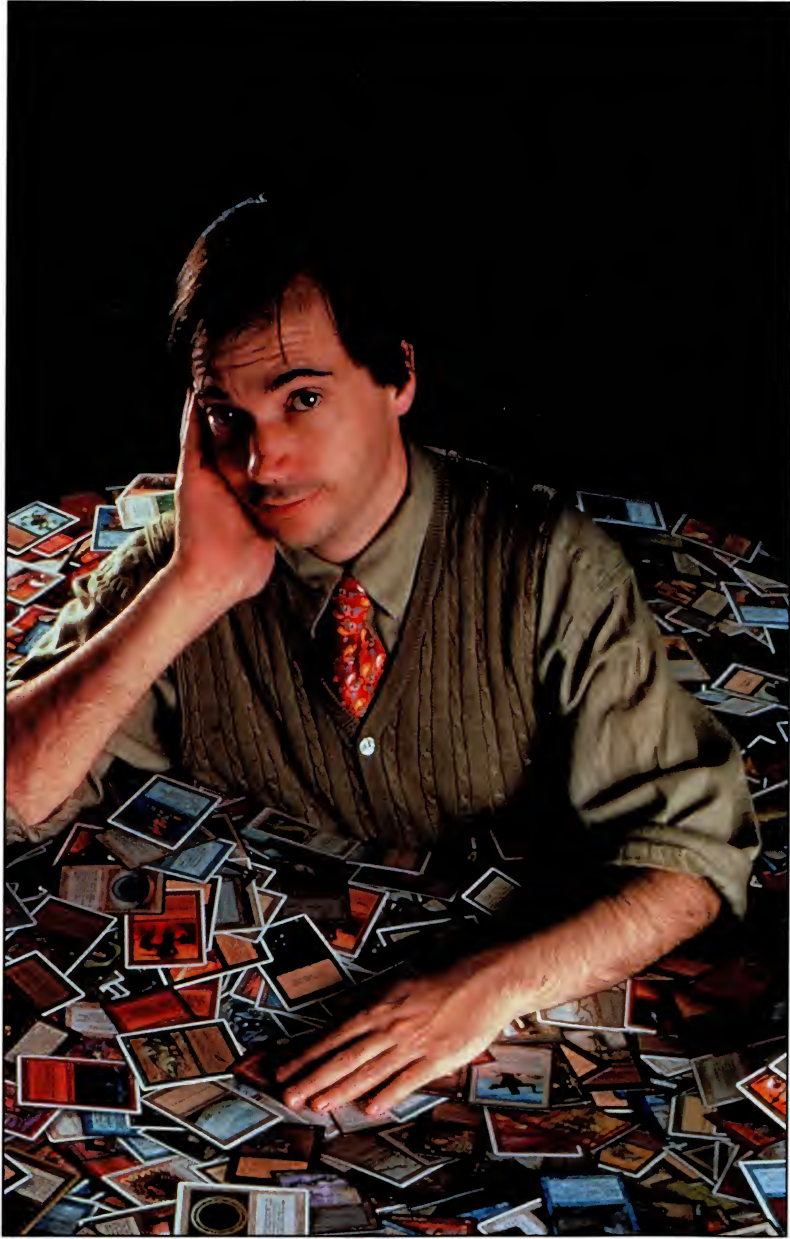
FOR RICHARD, PETER, JESPER, AND THE MAGIC ARTISTS



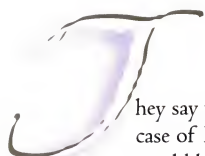
Dread of Night by Richard Thomas

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THE ORIGINS^{of} MAGIC[®]



They say that art imitates life, but in the case of MAGIC: THE GATHERING,[®] it would be more appropriate to say that art defines life. That is because when I created Magic, contrary to most fantasy game settings I wasn't trying to tell a pre-determined story. Rather, I wanted to provide players with evocative art that conveyed story elements from which they could weave their own tale. Players wouldn't know what the Winter Orb was, for instance, but between the art by Mark Tedin, the name on the card, and the card's impact in the game, players could assemble their own view of the Dominia setting. Fabulous art, more than a preset story, defined the world.

The *Antiquities*[®] card set changed that by integrating art and plot. The designers began with characters and a story that they wanted to tell through the cards. At first, I confess this seemed crazy to me. Unlike more conventional modes of storytelling, the nature of a trading card game prevents controlling the order in which players are introduced to the characters and events. But this inability to force a linear storyline made me realize that this approach was not so different from my original goal. It came to me then that MAGIC: THE GATHERING players are like archaeologists, piecing together the story from a handful of illustrations, names, and flavor text. It's like the tale is being whispered in bits and pieces to players—words on the wind—rather

than blurred from a single point of view. This is something I hadn't experienced in gaming before, and that difference, I believe, is at the core of MAGIC: THE GATHERING's popularity.

The art of telling a story in a trading card game has reached its zenith with *The Rath Cycle*[™]. Beginning with the *Weatherlight*[™] card set, we've unveiled a more traditional epic fantasy. Gerrard and the rest of the *Weatherlight* crew are at the center of a story that continues through *Tempest*[™], *Stronghold*[™] and, *Exodus*[™]—and beyond in upcoming novels and card sets.

The evolution of these characters and their story is revealed here from conceptual sketches to finished art. If the players are, indeed, archaeologists, then this book is their atlas to explore the exciting world that has been brought to life through the hard work of illustrators and the entire Magic design team. Together, they have fashioned Rath into a unique environment, not just for the MAGIC: THE GATHERING game, but also for the story behind Magic as well.

I hope you enjoy exploring it as much as you do the Rath card sets.

Richard Garfield

DOMINARIA:

The LIVING SOUL *of* MAGIC



Simply put, in a universe where powerful spellcasters travel, learn, battle, and die, Dominaria is prime real estate. The central hub in a wheel of connected planes called the multiverse, Dominaria contains not only great storehouses of magical energy called mana, but the geological and topological features these spellcasters need to draw on and focus for their own personal use.

The multiverse (known collectively as Dominia) is a place of magic, and magic is powered by mana. Mana is the basic, all-pervading energy that is the foundation of all the

Above, Island by Eric Peterson; right, Swamp by Romas; far right bottom, Mountains by Brian Durfee; middle, Plains by Douglas Shuler; top, Forest by John Avon. Background design, Dominaria and the Null Moon by Brian Dugan, Anthony Waters, and Sonia Telesco.





planes of Dominia and everything on those planes. Every creature, place, or material object in the multiverse contains some mana; in addition, some things that do not have a material existence (spirits, strong emotions, even dreams) contain some mana. It is both a sort of magical “electricity” as well as the “soul” of things.

Spellcasters draw mana primarily from land because they provide the purest forms of colored mana (swamps for black magic, islands for blue, forests for green, mountains for red, and plains for white). A spellcaster “tags,” or makes a connection with a geographical area,



and then can call forth the mana from any physical distance as long as he is on the same plane as the lands that he or she has tagged. Mana-wielding planes-walkers are different from mere wizards or mages in that they have the innate ability to travel from one plane of reality to another. Due to its inherent energy reserves, natural beauty, and biological diversity, Dominaria is a favorite destination for some planeswalkers to study, trade, and build; others use the world’s vast resources to raise armies, conquer nations, and construct political or martial power bases from which they



can strike out against the other worlds in the cluster and expand their personal influence.

As with any valuable domain, Dominaria's resources offer equal opportunities for use and misuse by powerful beings with the knowledge and the will to use or exploit them. It is also a vibrant, dynamic system of natural, spiritual, and political vectors, however, and its inhabitants also have access to its gifts, which they use to enrich themselves, attack their enemies, and even fend off the depredations of unwelcome planeswalkers.

Dominaria is literally a world of living opportunities, where the only limitations on one's actions are one's knowledge, one's discipline, and one's ability to interact with others in an ongoing struggle to define what shape the world should take and what one's own role in that world will be.

"More and more requirements were introduced

in the story as the design evolved.

The challenging part was to integrate

the reason that the Stronghold was

there in the first place. We had locations,

but there wasn't a logic behind the

structure itself, or even the plane of Rath,

so we did some brainstorming.

The Stronghold became the focal point

as the generator of flowstone,

the center of activity in the plane."

—Mark Tedin

Plains by Terese Nielson



The
RATH CYCLE

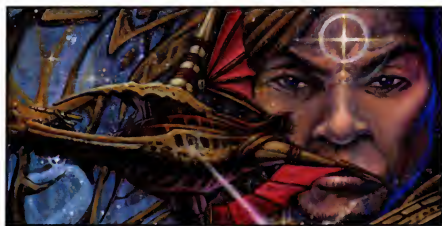
The Art of

Without a doubt, this is the first time that a book has been published to showcase the art from a card game. But *MAGIC: THE GATHERING* is no ordinary card game.

This, the first in a series of *The Art of MAGIC: THE GATHERING* books, focuses on the story of *The Rath Cycle*. To fully appreciate the scope of the melding of art and story in *The Rath Cycle*, it is necessary to understand the phenomenal impact *MAGIC: THE GATHERING* has had on fantasy art and gaming in general.

MAGIC: THE GATHERING began its remarkable life as a fun, fast-playing game of sorcerous combat and sharp card trading. Its rules were unusual enough to warrant a patent. But beneath its revolutionary rules and immense popularity, it was still just a game.

It didn't stay "just a game" for long. Players wanted to know more. How was the world of Dominaria created? Who were the legendary brothers Urza and Mishra? Where did *MAGIC* come from, and what is mana, really? How do artifacts work? Each card, with an illustration and accompanying paragraph of text, reveals one tiny



piece of the whole tale. Unraveling this story and assembling it into a coherent picture is a slow process that requires patient concentration by the reader, who may not even have all the pieces of the puzzle. But the rewards are as great as the challenges; the sense of mystery and discovery is powerful in this new style of storytelling.

The art and the words are equal partners in their task. How many books have a beautiful painting to accompany every paragraph? The art sets the tone of the world and establishes the scene for every segment of the story. It is also synonymous with the game. Visually, playing *MAGIC: THE GATHERING* is unlike playing any other game. It is a treat for the eyes and the imagination, as well as a challenge to the mind.

And what art! When *MAGIC: THE GATHERING* was released in 1993, it set a new standard for game art. Individual pieces have become cultural icons that are recognized by millions of fans worldwide. Where most card games are utterly abstract, *MAGIC: THE GATHERING* has personality. Each card is different, with its own name and its own effect in

Top, Ertai's
Meddling by
Steve Luke; below,
the artwork for
Tempest packaging, by
Mark Tedin, Anson
Maddocks, Kev
Walker, and
Matt Wilson





the game. From the very beginning, cards were designed to reflect the atmosphere and mystery of an exotic land where wizards and mythical beasts grapple for supremacy.

It is against this vivid backdrop that the story of *The Rath Cycle* and the subject of this magnificent art book is unveiled in four MAGIC: THE GATHERING expansion card sets: *Weatherlight*, *Tempest*, *Stronghold*, and *Exodus*.

The story begins in Jamuraa when the boy Gerrard Capashen is adopted by the ruler of a warclan. Gerrard is accompanied by a remarkable companion, a golem named Karn. Hidden inside the golem is part of Gerrard's Legacy, a collection of magical artifacts. Gerrard is raised alongside Vuel, the ruler's son. But Vuel is jealous and vindictive; the young men become bitter rivals and eventually enemies. When Vuel sets off

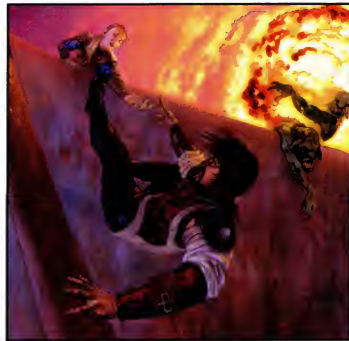
a dynastic war against his father, the warclan is destroyed.

Gerrard joins the crew of the flying ship *Weatherlight* and for years travels across Dominaria. Eventually he leaves the *Weatherlight* to study the arts of war and combat in Benalia, convinced that the Legacy and his heritage bring doom to his companions.

Meanwhile, Vuel has been transformed into Volrath and become evincar of Rath, a twisted mirror plane of Dominaria. But his hatred for Gerrard still burns hot. To lure Gerrard and the Legacy to Rath, Volrath kidnaps Sisay, the *Weatherlight*'s captain. The crew of the *Weatherlight* seeks out Gerrard to lead them on a quest to free their imprisoned captain.

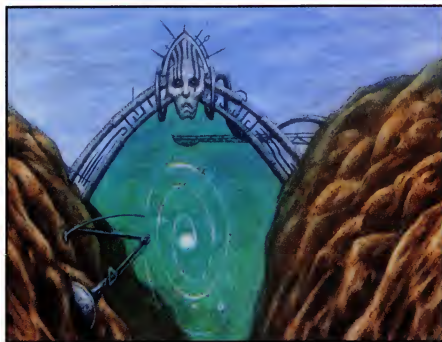
After planeshifting to Rath, the *Weatherlight* is soon attacked by Volrath's flying ship the *Predator* and suffers several losses. A shot from the *Predator* throws Gerrard overboard, two crew members are captured by the evil Greven il-Vec, and the *Weatherlight* is damaged so that the ship cannot return to Dominaria under its own power.

Gerrard meets with the Oracle and her people after his fall and is later reunited with his companions at the encampment of the native



Clockwise from top left, No Quarter by Doug Chaffee; Sudden Impact by Alan Pollack; Tahngarth's Rage by Hannibal King; and Stun by Terese Neilson.





Clockwise from top left, background, Style Guide reference for the Rath Gate by Anson Maddocks; Mind Over Matter by Keith Parkinson; Crovax the Cursed by Pete Venters, Scapegoat by Darin Bader; Death Stroke by Colin McNiel; Erratic Portal by John Matson.

elves. The elves help with minor repairs to *Weatherlight* and reveal to the crew a magical portal that leads to an unknown destination, perhaps their only means of escape.

Undaunted, the crew presses onward. Volrath's fortress is suspended inside an enormous volcano called the Stronghold. *Weatherlight* makes its way cautiously through blistering caverns to the mile-high Stronghold. Once there, Gerrard and the crew battle their way through Volrath's minions until Gerrard confronts Volrath himself. Final victory seems to be in Gerrard's grasp when his killing blow unveils Volrath's trickery; an experimental shapeshifter has taken his place, and the foe escapes.

But the mission, at least, is a success. Captain Sisay is rescued, and the surviving crew members return with the Legacy to the *Weatherlight*.

The damaged vessel still faces the daunting task of finding a way back home to Dominaria. *Weatherlight* flees to the portal with the *Predator* in pursuit, narrowly managing to slip through. But for a second time, the price is high; the wizard Ertai, whose magic opened the portal with a little help from the great planeswalker Urza, is trapped on the wrong side, where Volrath's soldiers quickly capture him. Sisay and the Legacy have been rescued at a high cost indeed.

For all its grand scope, *The Rath Cycle* makes up only a small portion of the overall story of Dominaria and MAGIC: THE GATHERING. Gerrard, Crovax, Karn, Tahngarth, and the rest of the *Weatherlight* crew fight for a cause that is often obscure to them.

Even though this is an "art" book, it contains much more than illustrations from a card game. Concept sketches, blueprints, technical specifications, and story details blend together to extend, amplify, and clarify the epic tale of *The Rath Cycle*. Whether you play MAGIC: THE GATHERING or just love fantasy stories and fantastic art, you're bound to be pleased by what you find here.



The

WEATHERLIGHT



The Weatherlight



All ships have a place of birth. Seaborne empires are defined by the cities where their fleets are built. The look and carriage of a ship is as much a badge of its birthplace as the shape of someone's face defines them as Yotian or Jamuraan. Ships and their crews are both living records of where the ship originated. They often declare where the ship is going, whether to a hallowed place in a historical text or to become a garden for fishes in some blue corner of the world.

In this respect *Weatherlight* differs from all the others that race the winds of Dominaria. Her true history is unknown. She flies; that alone makes her unique. Her lines match nothing that has ever come before her. The *Weatherlight* stands out in this age of wood and canvas sheets, a magical, half-Thran ironclad towering above her sisters. Her life has stretched past the births and deaths of generations of ships. The *Weatherlight* has no nationality, no home port she can declare. She has guarded her origins closely, just like her ultimate role in the conflict to come. She is the bearer of the Legacy in its living and inanimate

forms. Given such a responsibility, it is no surprise that the secrets she surrenders yield more questions than they answer.

It is fair to say that nothing like the *Weatherlight* has cut Dominarian waters or its skies since the Age of the Thran. Few dare to build on the same massive scale, and none have made such a marriage of wood and metal, the mundane and the magical, as is contained in her form.

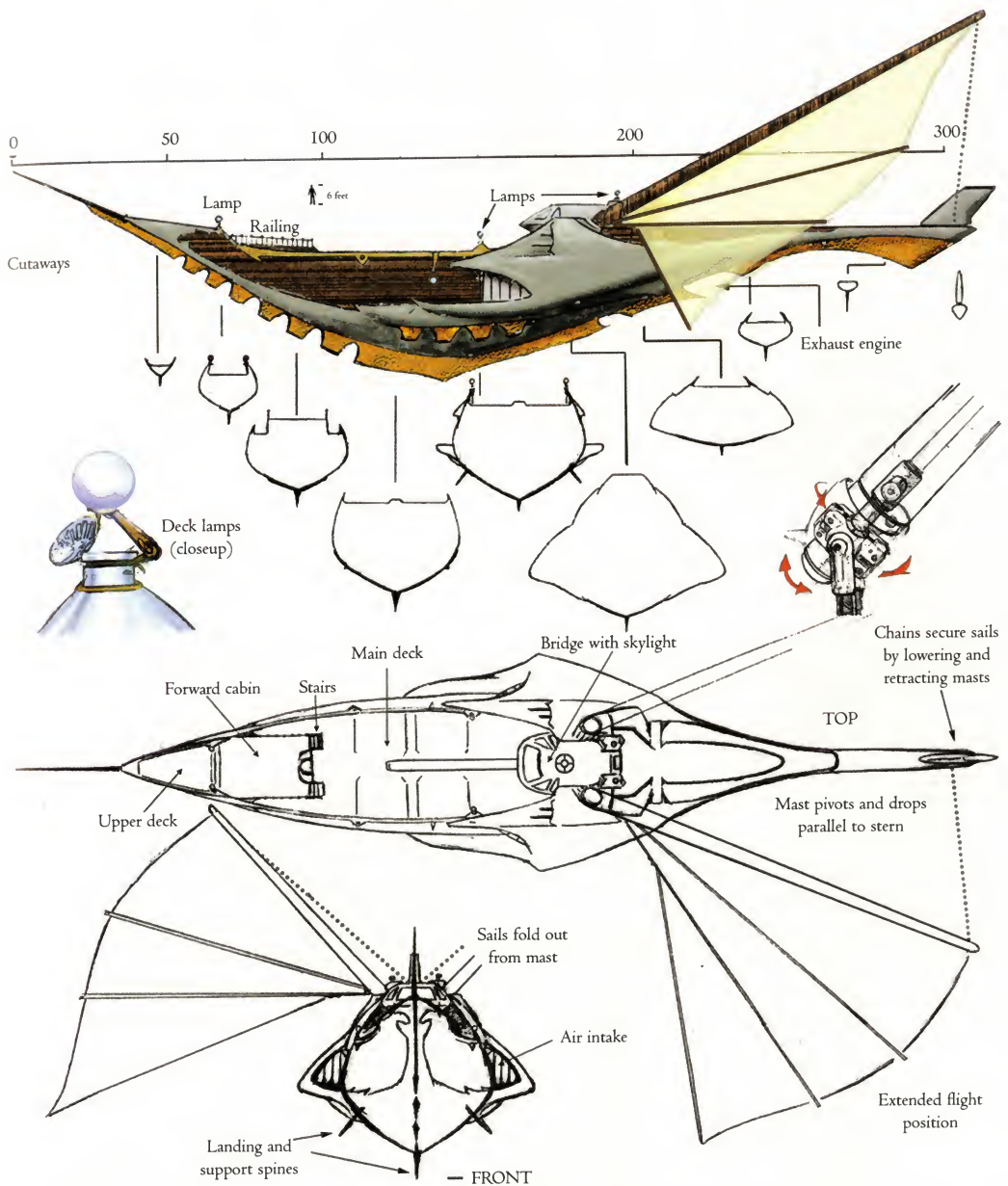
Weatherlight is both fish and fowl, a sailing vessel when circumstances demand, and a flyer when need be. She is the vessel of the Legacy. She was never intended to ferry a nation's goods or fulfill some imperial design. *Weatherlight* was created to serve a higher calling.

The *Weatherlight* is several centuries old, older than a vessel of her kind should have lasted. Rumors of her origins place her in half a dozen locales across the surface of Dominaria. Some have hinted she was not made but grown. There are enough hints to suggest that she has been refitted and restructured many times over the years, so much so that she bears little resemblance to her original design or form. Her shape was

The *Weatherlight* navigates her way between huge shafts of the flowstone in the furnaces deep within Rath. Right, Furnace of Rath by John Matson.



Overleaf, *Tempest* promotional poster by Donato Giancola.

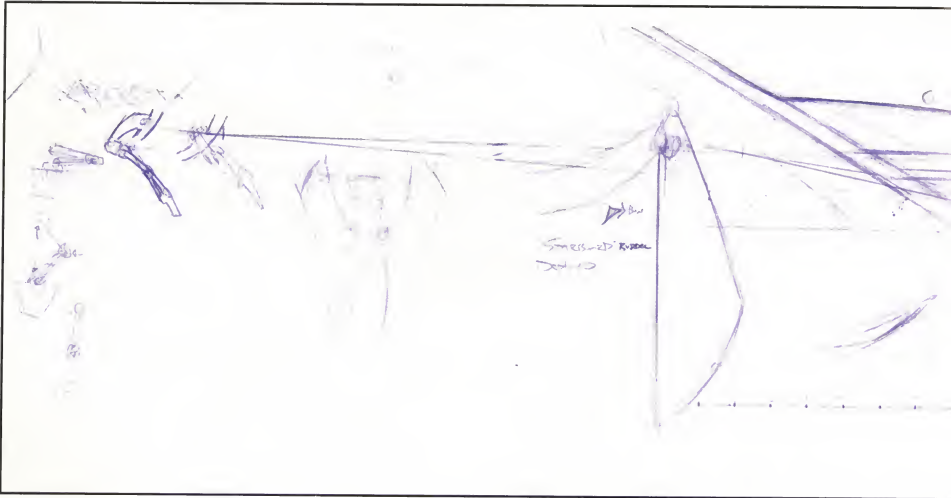


"A Style Guide is created and continually updated specifically to detail the look of the major races, personalities, and environments inherent within a card set. Its main purpose is to ensure when an artist produces a specific illustration, say, of an elf, that all of those pieces with elves in them will be consistent.

This helps generate an intrinsically consistent environment on which to build." —Chaz Elliott

Weatherlight's sail configuration and hull cross-sections. Schematics by Pete Venters; lamp and mast mechanisms by Anthony Waters.

Right, this cutaway sketch demonstrates the degree of detail needed to flesh out all aspects of *The Rath Cycle*. Stripped of concealing timbers, a cross-section of the *Weatherlight* reveals a battleship. Heavy beams of Yavimayan wood have grown around the ship's rigid metal spine, as shown by the section of the amidships false bury (the vertical structure in the center of the drawing). Her exterior surfaces are carvel-built to this living endoskeleton, with planking secured by what appear to be nails. The crew's quarters are at the far left, the engine, officers' berths, galley, and observation decks are at the far right. Sketches by Anthony Waters.



not fixed; she possesses the strength, or luck, or perhaps stubbornness, to adapt to the world around her.

Being captain of the *Weatherlight* is no easy thing, nor is being one of her crew. Even signing on as a passenger might make one liable for more grief than a mere shipwreck could cause. She is a ship driven by forces stronger than winds or the passions of her crew. Her course has nearly broken her time and again.

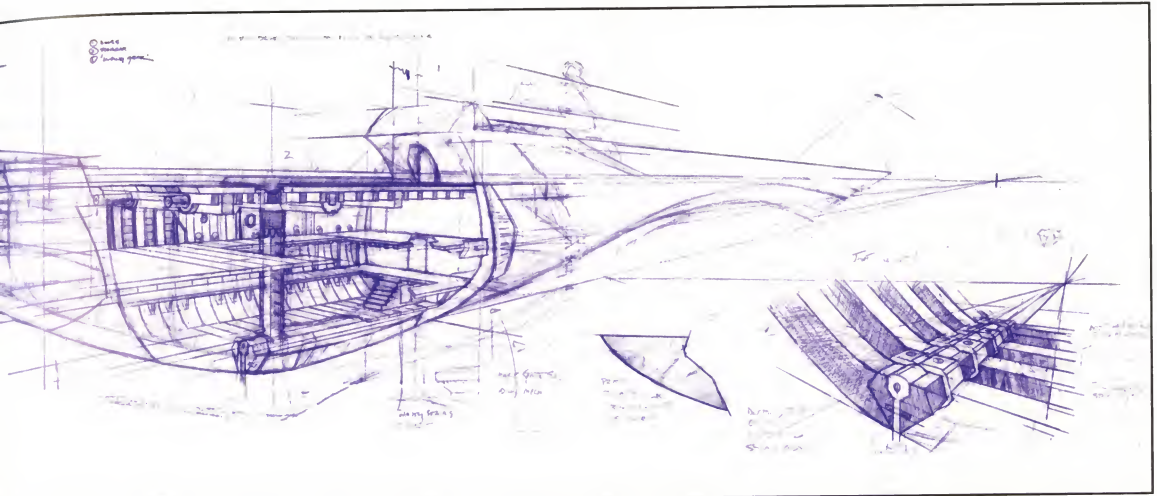
Of all the Legacy's elements, none are on so grand a scale as the *Weatherlight*. At more than 330 feet in length, 74 feet in beam, 24 feet in draft, and 4,100 tons displaced when loaded she is easily among the largest craft afloat in present-day Dominaria. She is so large, in fact, that she outsizes most of her competitors twice over. Her lines confuse, whether they were initially designed to or not; her unusual masts and rigging can't help but attract attention. Few modern ships possess a power plant, at least one that isn't made out of

canvas or hemp. Parts of her have the sleek lines of a bark or brig, but just past amidships she is transformed into something otherworldly. The flared curvature of her hull seems more akin to wings or seashells and speaks of arcane technologies unknown on Dominaria for centuries, if not millennia. She takes on cargo hull to hull with common traders. At sea she's cumbersome, the target of much derision from her own crew, yet in the air *Weatherlight* outpaces any of her seabound competitors, attaining speeds of over one hundred miles per hour.

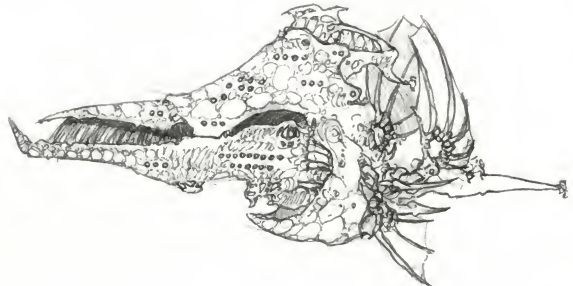
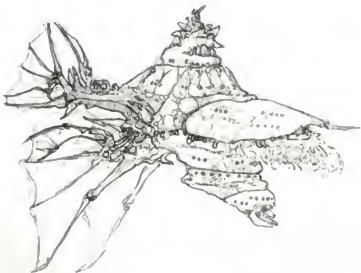
Sisay has flown *Weatherlight* over the breadth of Dominaria, yet the vast majority who have seen her know her as a sailing ship. This is intentional. It is easier for her crew and mission if her aerial capabilities are disguised. Few craft ply the skyways of Dominaria anymore; those that do attract a great deal of attention.

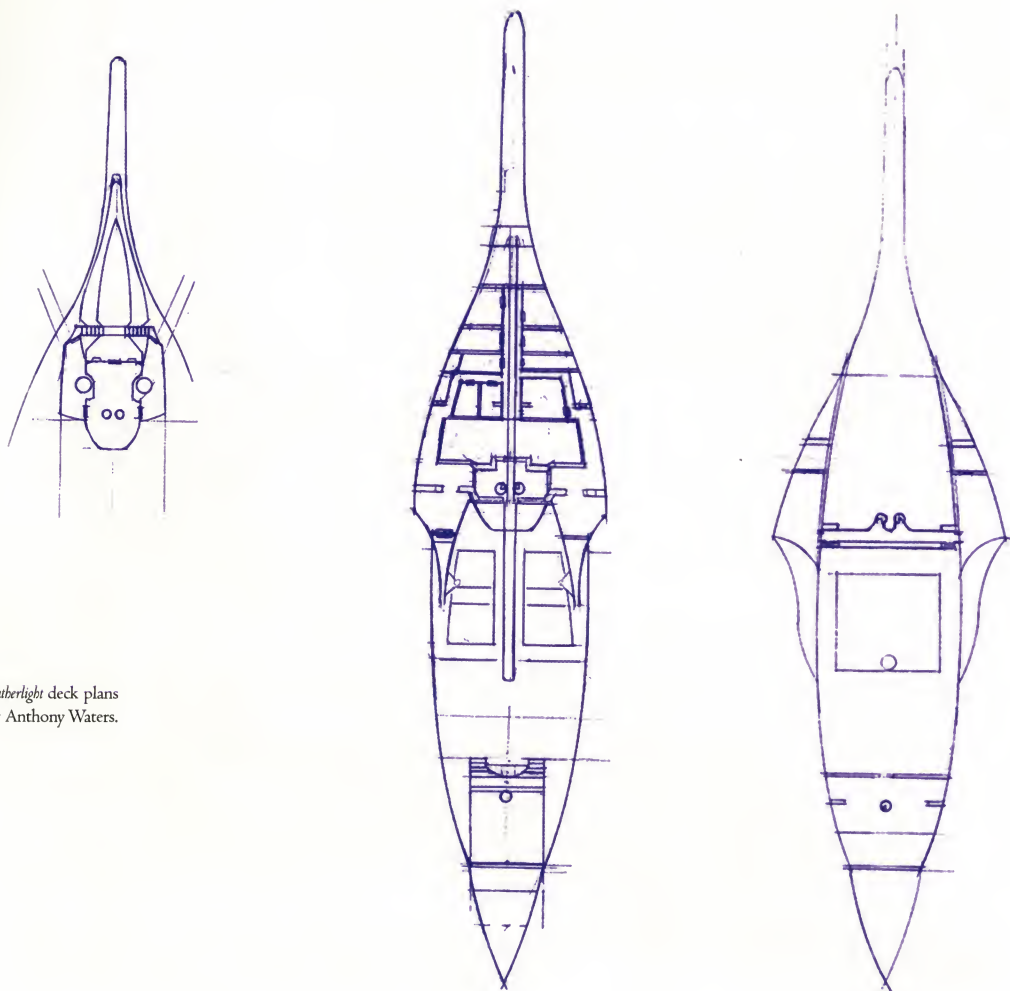
The first deck or poop is reached through the bridge. Short of scaling a mast, this is the highest part of the ship, and the sternmost. One can access the exterior housings for the mast mechanisms from here by way of a pair of narrow staircases. Aft of the stairs, at the far end of the deck, are the exterior heads. The space isn't generous—two normal humans, sitting side by side, would find it uncomfortably close. It does offer a spectacular view, however.





Left and below, a project on the scale of *The Rath Cycle* provides ample opportunity to explore new design directions. These sketches are a small sample of the visual theorizing necessary to develop the setting and story. Sketches by Anthony Waters.



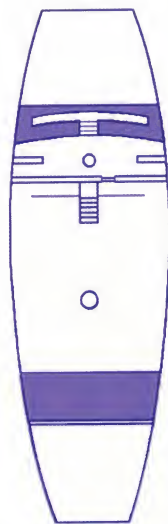
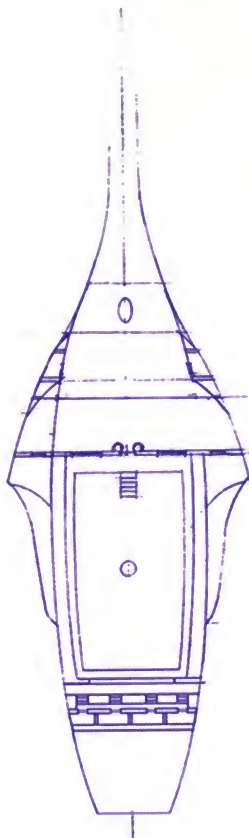


Weatherlight deck plans
by Anthony Waters.

The poop is a terribly exposed portion of the deck. Windscreens from the bridge lamps begin to feather out around this area, making crosscurrents a constant danger. Fortunately, very little work takes sailors here.

Weatherlight's main deck sees the greatest amount of activity. Her officers, passengers, and most of her crew are housed and fed here. Most of the crew's section, located in the bow, has ceilings of six feet, not including braces. Headroom is unusually generous in the aft section, averaging eight feet. All of *Weatherlight*'s amenities are to be found in the stern. Her galley and ship's messes,

separated by rank, wrap around the weather room, a sort of *Weatherlight* foyer just below the bridge, which leads also to the orlop deck, below. Engineers often take breaks from working the mast mechanisms in this cooler, quieter spot. A heavy wooden door with a raised lip provides entry onto the deck. Ship's mast mechanisms are found in the mast room, a windowless cell set dead-center in this quarter of the *Weatherlight*. Orim's sickbay has its back to this noisy chamber. Officer's cabins and guest staterooms account for the remaining space.



"Exploring Weatherlight's equipment has helped us examine the physics of planeswalking, since Weatherlight can grant ordinary Dominarians the ability to planeswalk. It's also given us insight into the history of the Thran, because the Weatherlight's design is based upon the templates of that ancient civilization."

—Chaz Elliott

The orlop deck of the *Weatherlight* gives access to the topmost floor of the cargo hold. Much of the crew's supplies are stored here, atop whatever cargo she may be carrying. *Weatherlight's* twin observation rooms are reached from this deck.

Approximately half of the lower deck is open from the base of the mast aft, permitting larger cargo to be moved freely from the main deck to the bottom of the ship. A small, adjoining platform connects the engine room and either observation deck. Both outboard wings contain additional storage that can double as very cramped brigs.

The engine deck is composed in large part by the engine room, second only to the hold for sheer size, and with good reason: It contains *Weatherlight's* enormous power plant. A pair of large

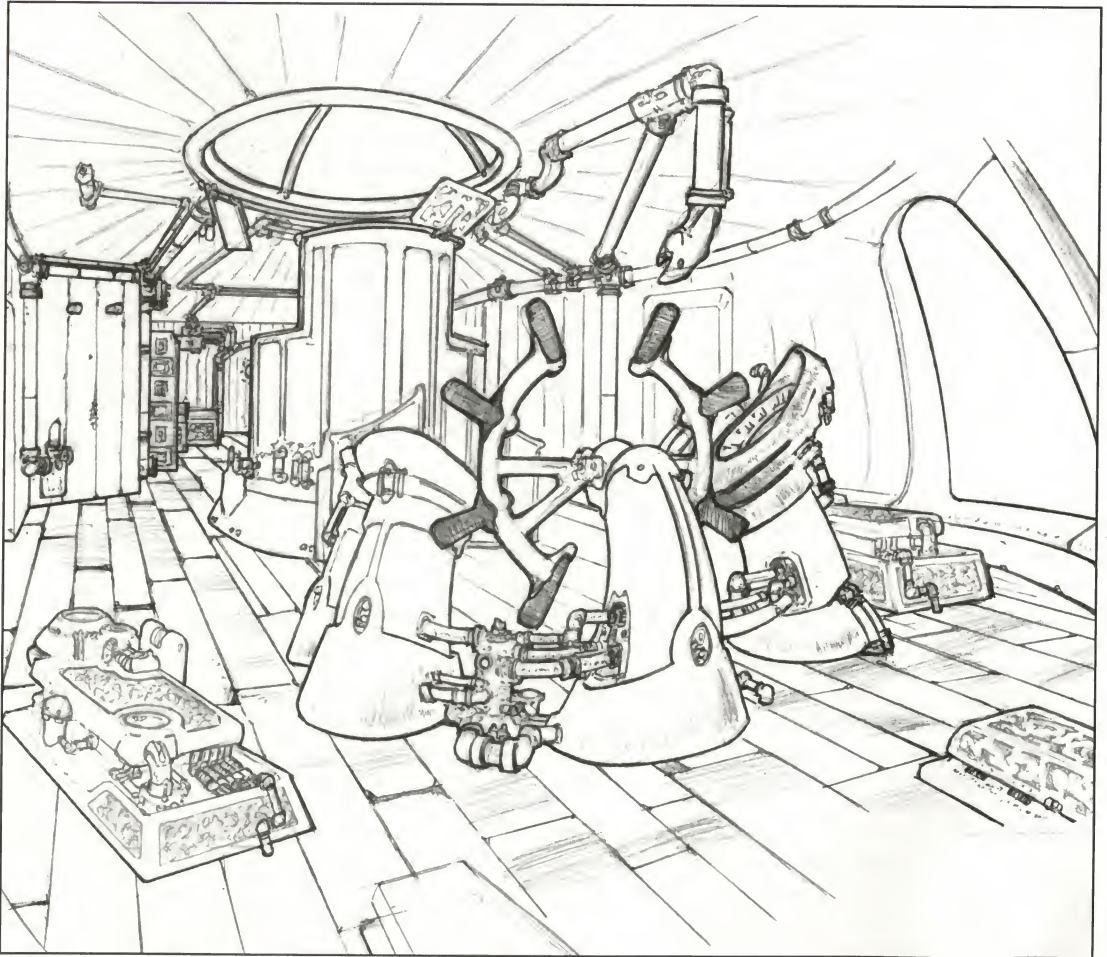
double doors opens into the cargo hold. Spaces in the superstructure flanking the engine block store equipment and allow access to the mana superfluid pool that is sandwiched between this deck and the bottom of the hull.

Forward of the engine room is the hold, skirted on all sides by a narrow catwalk. The bulkheads housing the landing spines are fitted beneath this deck and the orlop, straddling the amidships mark. Over the bow are a series of four cells, used to contain additional crew stores.

The lowest deck is the cargo hold floor. A stairway leads up from here to the engine room. Beneath the fourth deck catwalk a small door opens into Hanna's cramped workshop.

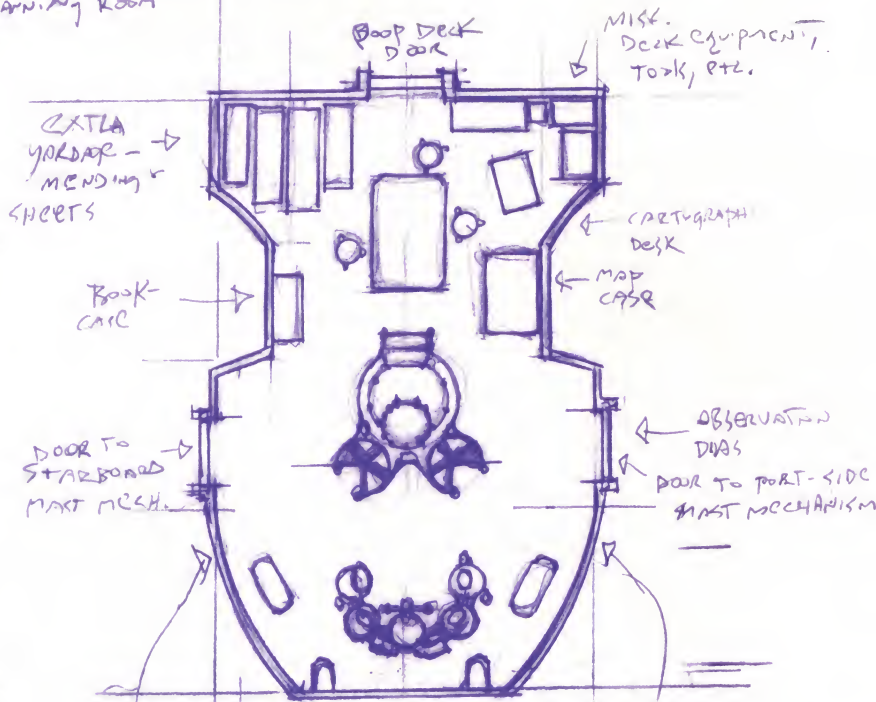
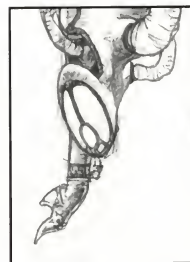


Every inch of the *Weatherlight* is packed with equipment, the magical vessel's veins and nerves. Artist Anthony Waters used an approach inspired by animation layouts to clearly reveal the bridge's true dimensions. However, this lends a misleading spaciousness to the bridge, which would be crowded with captain, crew, and goods. *Right*, early examples of *Weatherlight*'s bridge gear. Sketches by Anthony Waters.



The Bridge

STRUCTURE OF SHIP
NECESSITATES THE MOST
EQUIPMENT BEING STORED
MOSTLY ON THE BRIDGE. THIS
HAS LED TO UNDESIRABLE CROWDING
GIVEN THAT THE BRIDGE IS ALSO
THE PLANNING ROOM



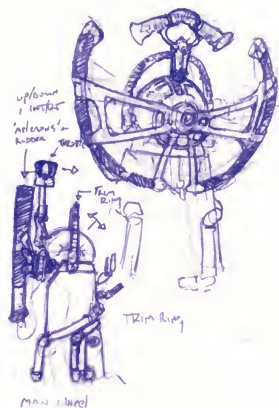
"One of the nicest pieces
of work I've seen is
the bridge. It was
definitely not what
I expected, and that's
exactly what I wanted."

—Pete Venters

Upper right,
interpretations of
ship's equipment,
inspired by the
designs of Tony
DiTerlizzi; above, top-
down schematic of
Weatherlight's bridge by
Anthony Waters.

If the engine room is the *Weatherlight's* heart, then the bridge is her mind. Like the engine room, the bridge of the *Weatherlight* is never empty, no matter the hour. It may have been an oversight, or pure cruelty on the part of her designers, but so little space exists elsewhere aboard the *Weatherlight* that her entire library of navigational stock resides in chests and drawers near the door to the poop deck. Captaincy on the *Weatherlight* means spending the bulk of the day and night poring over charts on the bridge.

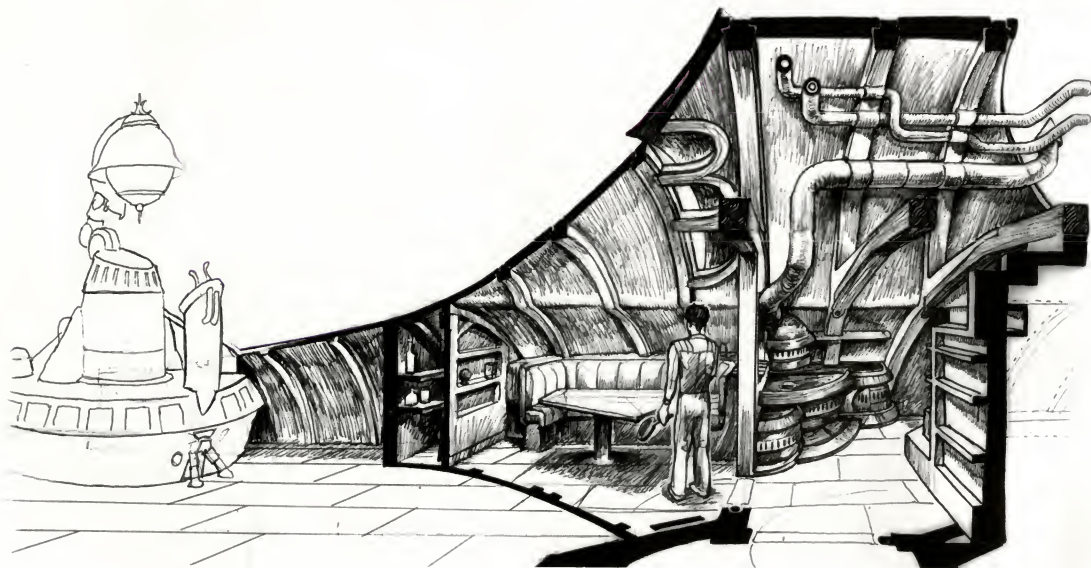
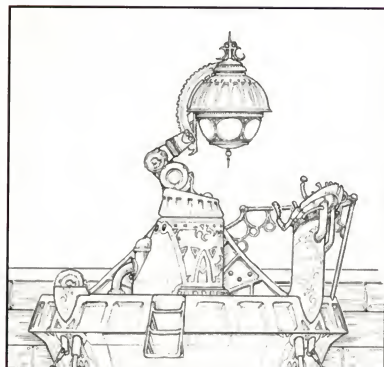
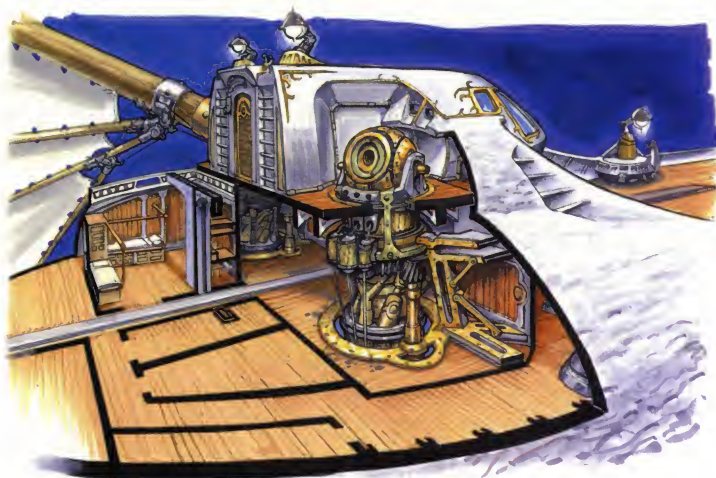
Infighting is inevitable among the ranks on any vessel. Deckhands complain of spending the voyage marinated in salt water or chilled by wind. Engineers bellyache about being as well oiled as their machinery. The bridge crew's torture is that they are the last to be fed because it is crucial they stay on post. Since the galley is directly below them, they spend the whole of each mess period engulfed in the aroma of their crewmates' food.



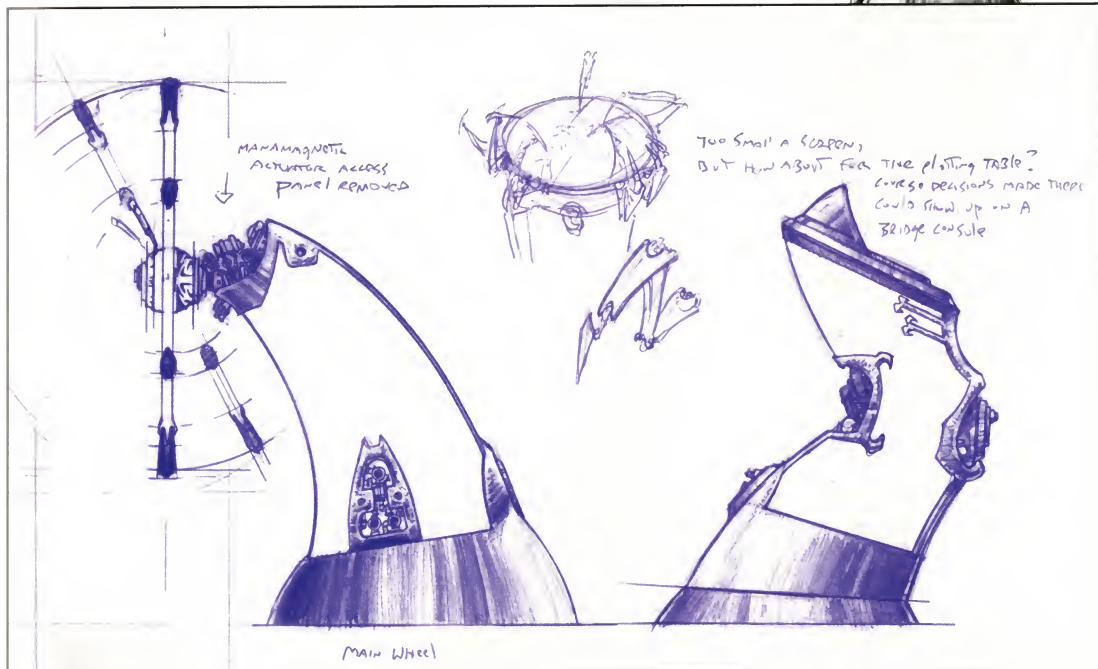
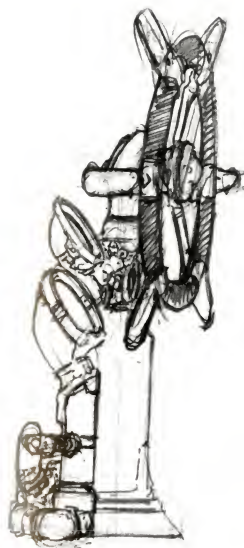
Above, early concept sketches of the ship's main wheel by Anthony Waters.

Clockwise from top right, mast room cutaway; light fixture; kitchen and off mess by Mark Tedin.

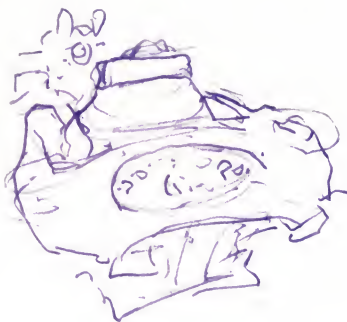
Weatherlight bridge equipment generates a sense of omnipresence. Two-way voice tubes with mouthpieces fashioned in the shape of fanciful sea creatures allow communication between the ship's various decks. Skillfully crafted devices display her course through the layers of aether; others work in tandem with machinery in the engine room to keep her steersmen aware of her engine's heartbeat. A sighting blister rises from the middle of the room. It is considered an unparalleled luxury among the crew's veteran navigators to be able to mark the *Weatherlight's* place without having to brave the elements.



Far left, early ship's wheel; middle, early concept for the ship's throttle; below, navigational equipment; bottom, final design for the ship's wheel; more navigational gear; rough example of a mechanism used to mark Weatherlight's path along a ley chart (diagram of magical forces). Sketches by Anthony Waters.



The Engine Room



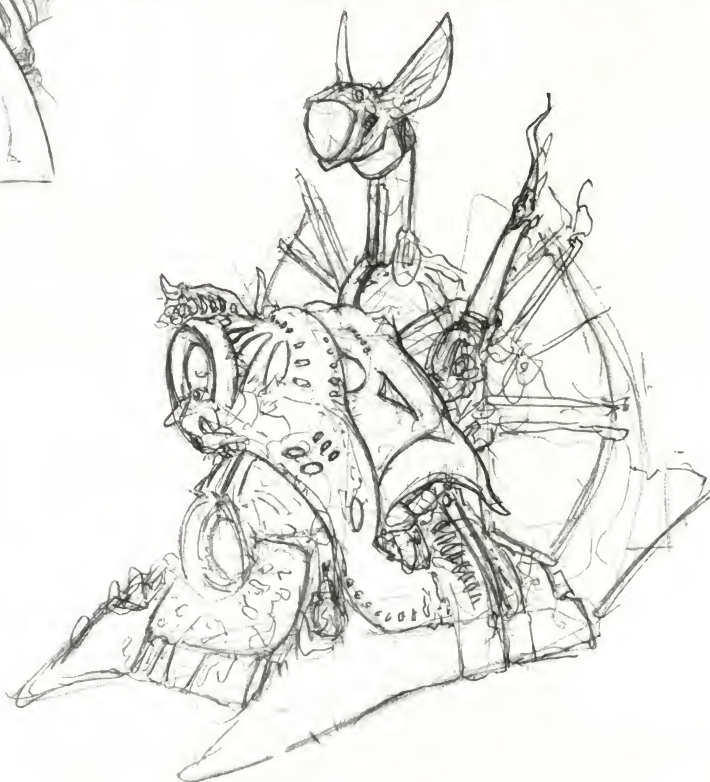
The genius of *Weatherlight*'s creator is most evident in the engine room. Tucked—more often crammed—into this space are all of the elements that mark the *Weatherlight* as unique. One such machine is the shift drive, a mechanism that permits transit from Dominaria to Rath.

The Thran crystal rests at the core of all this machinery. Without it all *Weatherlight*'s elaborate machinery is just so much ballast. This small gemstone rests in a jacketed container, tucked into the bowels of the main block of the engine. A separate device known as a mana converter uses mana to create a molasseslike green sludge, a fluid capable of carrying mana in suspension like an electrical charge. Heating this toxic goo causes the fluid to readily exchange its charge of magical potential, providing kinetic mana for the engine and power plant with increasing efficiency as its temperature increases. This liquid is forced through the chamber that holds the crystal, generating a magical feedback loop that provides power to the entire ship. A network of pumps feeds uncharged fluid into the crystal's reaction chamber from the reservoir sandwiched between the decks beneath the engine itself. Mana-enriched liquid is fed into the shift drive from this pool and, ultimately, to the gate reactor, the mechanism that provides the impetus for the *Weatherlight*.

It is believed that the gate reactor is a cleverly engineered copy of an ancient Thran engine. Hints culled from the Thran Tome support this notion. The reactor works by generating a small planar gate and tweaking it just out of phase several times a second. The resulting spatial imbalance causes explosions that, forced out of the manifold, produce thrust. It is an ingenious, if regrettably loud, device. Heat from this combustion is used to quicken the mana fluid without exposing it to the crystal by means of a special recirculating jacket that encircles the reactor's exhaust. Feedback is kept under control in this manner. Without the feedback loop there would be no engine, no planar shifting, and, most important of all, no generating of the field that allows *Weatherlight* to defy gravity.

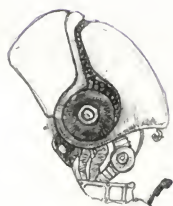
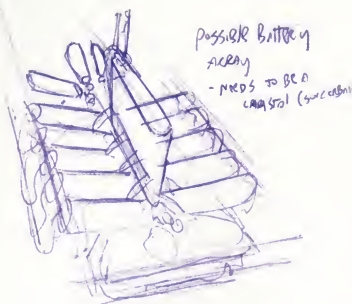
It is the subject of much debate as to which is worse: working in the mast room among all the grinding, shifting gears of the ship's masts, getting boiled in a room that's more like an oven, or working in the engineer's room, where the work is greasier and much, much louder. Inertial dampers transmit this unwanted noise down the length of the ship's metal superstructure. Thus the ship constantly produces a low hum.

Above, early speculative sketch of Weatherlight's power plant by Anthony Waters.

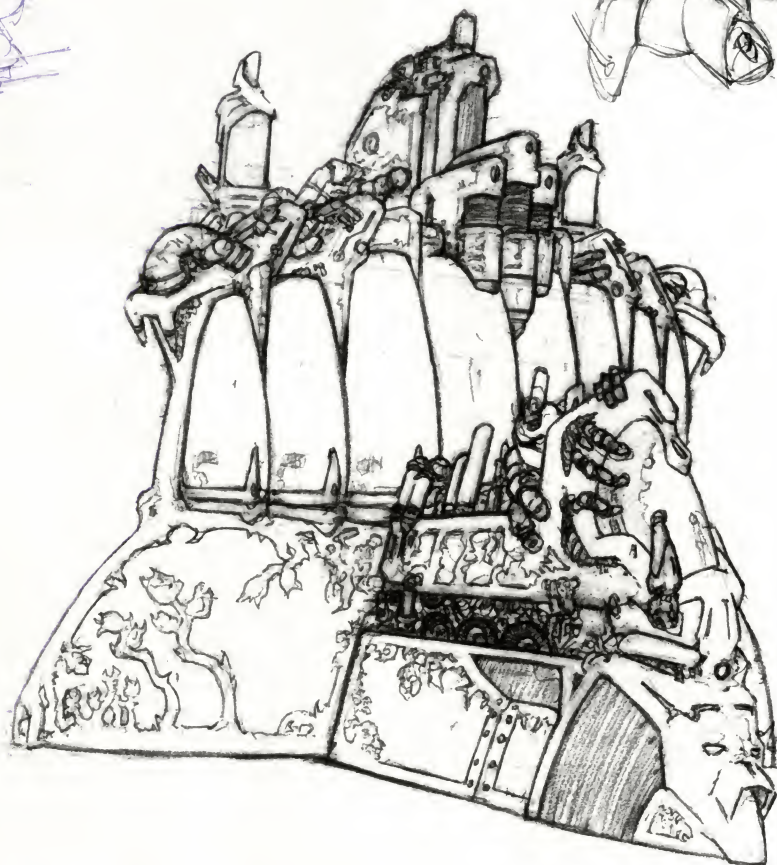


Weatherlight's engine went through many designs before one was selected that struck a balance between earlier Thran designs and the "Jules Vernian" look the team sought; sketches of early engine designs

by Anthony Waters; top right, Hanna leans against *Weatherlight's* engine apparatus in a painting by Tony DiTerlizzi, whose work had considerable effect on later designs of the *Weatherlight*.

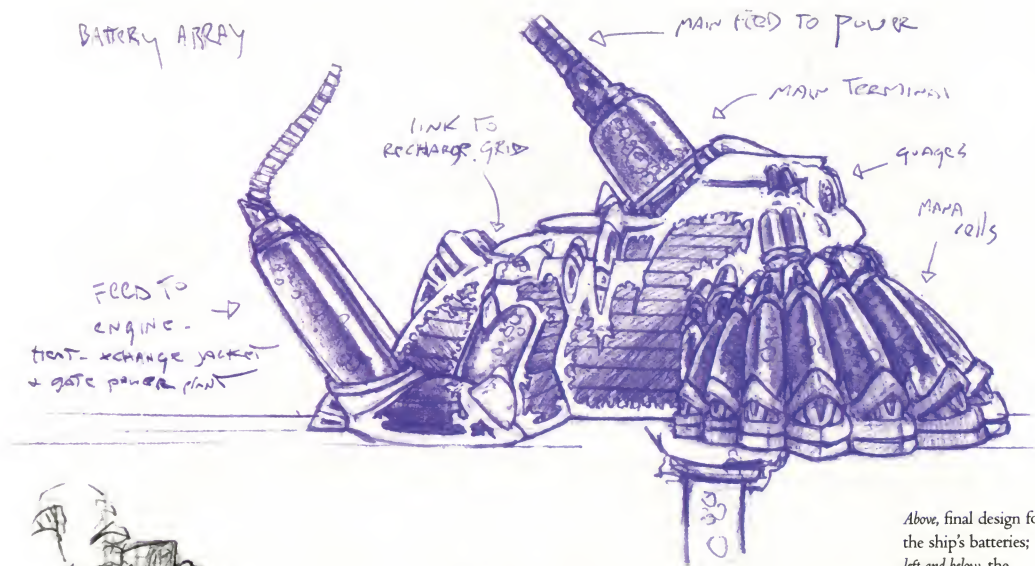


Clockwise from top left, early design for the Weatherlight's mana batteries; DiTerlizzi-inspired engine room equipment; another take on the Weatherlight's batteries; alternate configuration of the engine; rough sketches of the foc's'le heater unit; middle, the all important mana converter. Sketches by Anthony Waters.

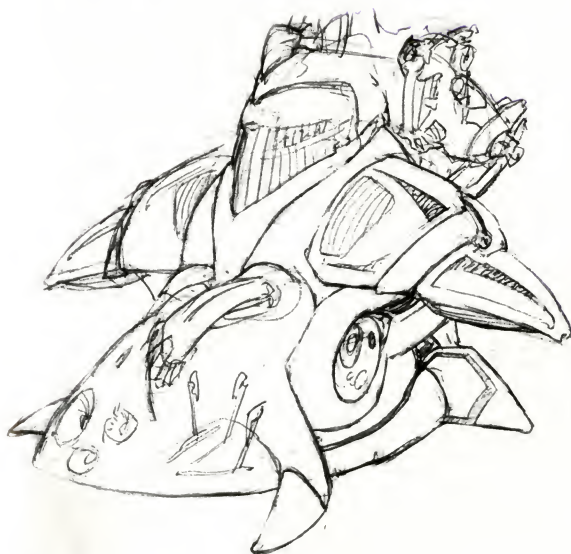


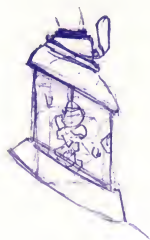
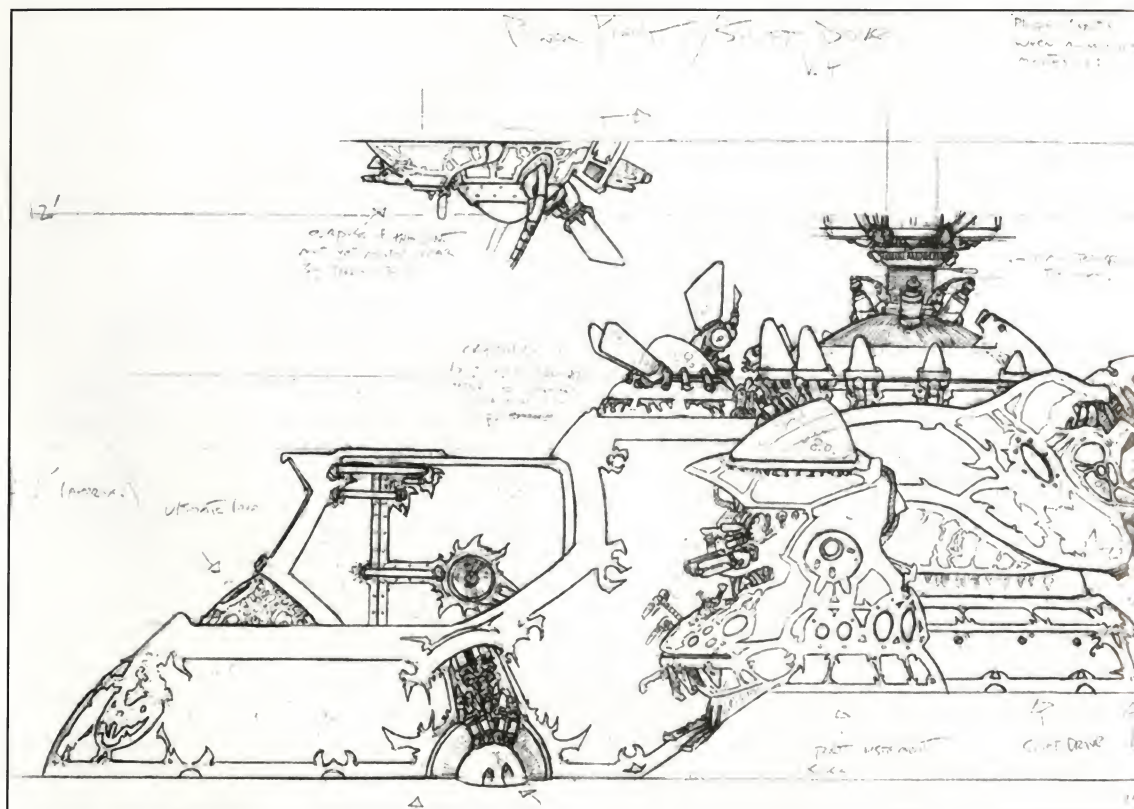
CONTAINING
A 'SUPERNOVA'
& DESIGNED
TO STORE &
CHARGE PURE
MANA





Above, final design for the ship's batteries; left and below, the engine block and its gadgetry went through a peculiar evolution—most were sketched on the back of priority lists during concept meetings. Sketches by Anthony Waters.

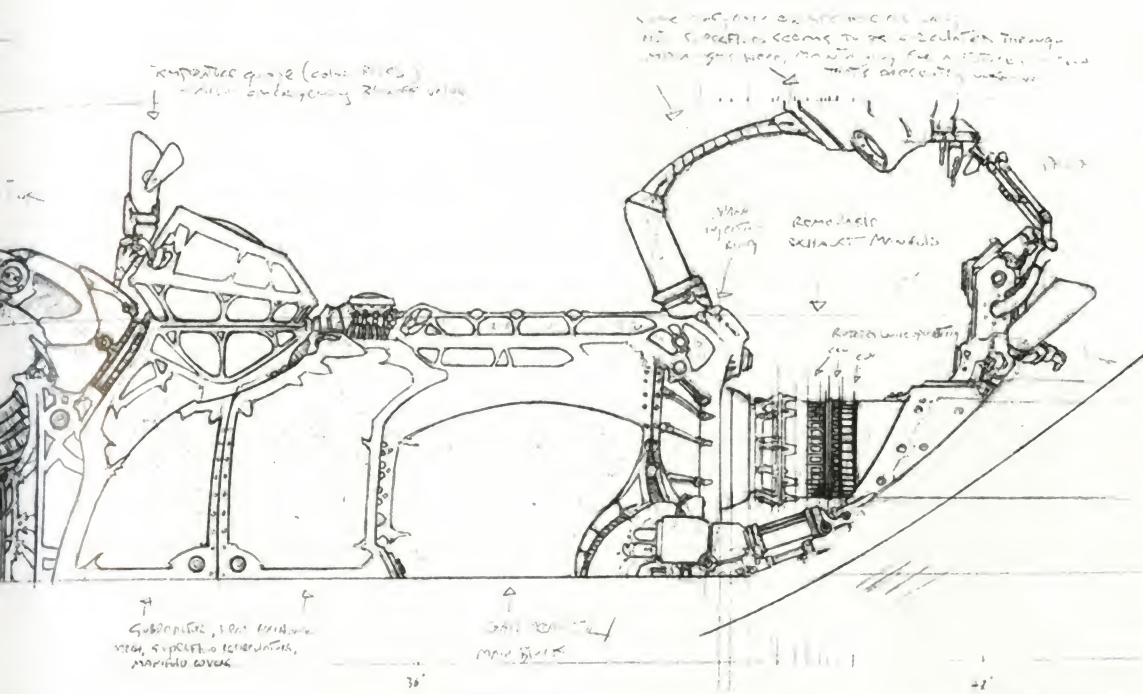




Above, Anthony Waters's sketch of the *Weatherlight*'s Thran crystal chamber. The housing for the crystal was cracked during the initial assault by the *Predator*'s moggs, filling the engine room with poisonous fumes.

The main block is the single most massive piece of machinery on the *Weatherlight* and the heaviest of the drive system's components, stretching across most of the engine room floor. It's roughly eleven feet at its highest point and eighteen feet at its widest. The weight of the block is perhaps best described by the look on the engineers' faces when it is mentioned that the block can be moved, and worse, that it needs to be. Caring for this monumental and excessively complex piece of equipment requires constant attention. Eight to ten engineers are on shift from sunrise to sunset, slaving over the batteries and fluid pumps, checking gauges, and adjusting feeds.

Housed in the block is the matrix of piping and gears that transfer power up through the ceiling to the mast room, the bridge, sickbay, the galley, and the deck lamps that shield the deck from strong winds. Access panels are carefully fitted along the gilding of the metal paneling; not that any of the engineers are enthusiastic about opening the beast or entering it. Consoles flank the huge machine and provide some idea as to the health of its inner workings. In addition, these consoles act as tuning mechanisms for the shift drive, the device by which *Weatherlight* slips into other planes of existence.

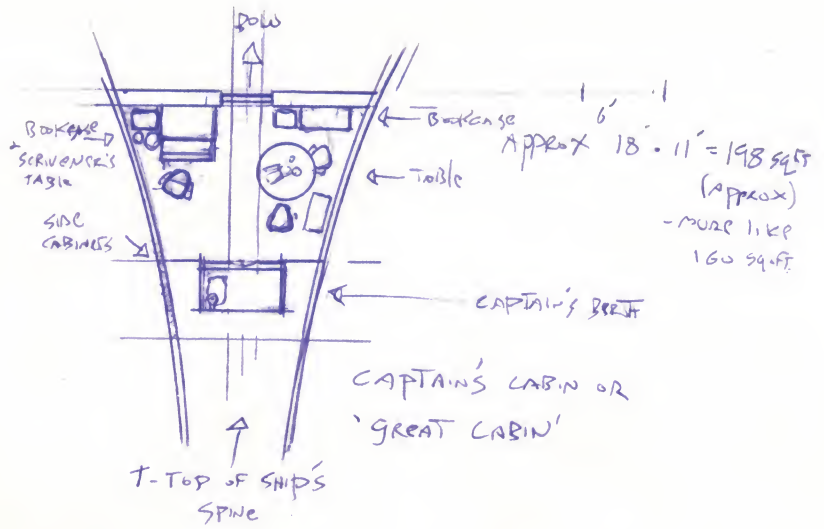


Much of the difficulty in working all of this elaborate machinery stems directly from the Thran Tome, the text with a name that implies it should be useful in dealing with the *Weatherlight*. This is not always the case. Seeing Hanna with the tome on her lap, surrounded by a huddle of frowning engineers, is not an uncommon sight. Clinics such as these have ended on a sour note so often that a common chant for the engine crew is, "Torch the Tome."

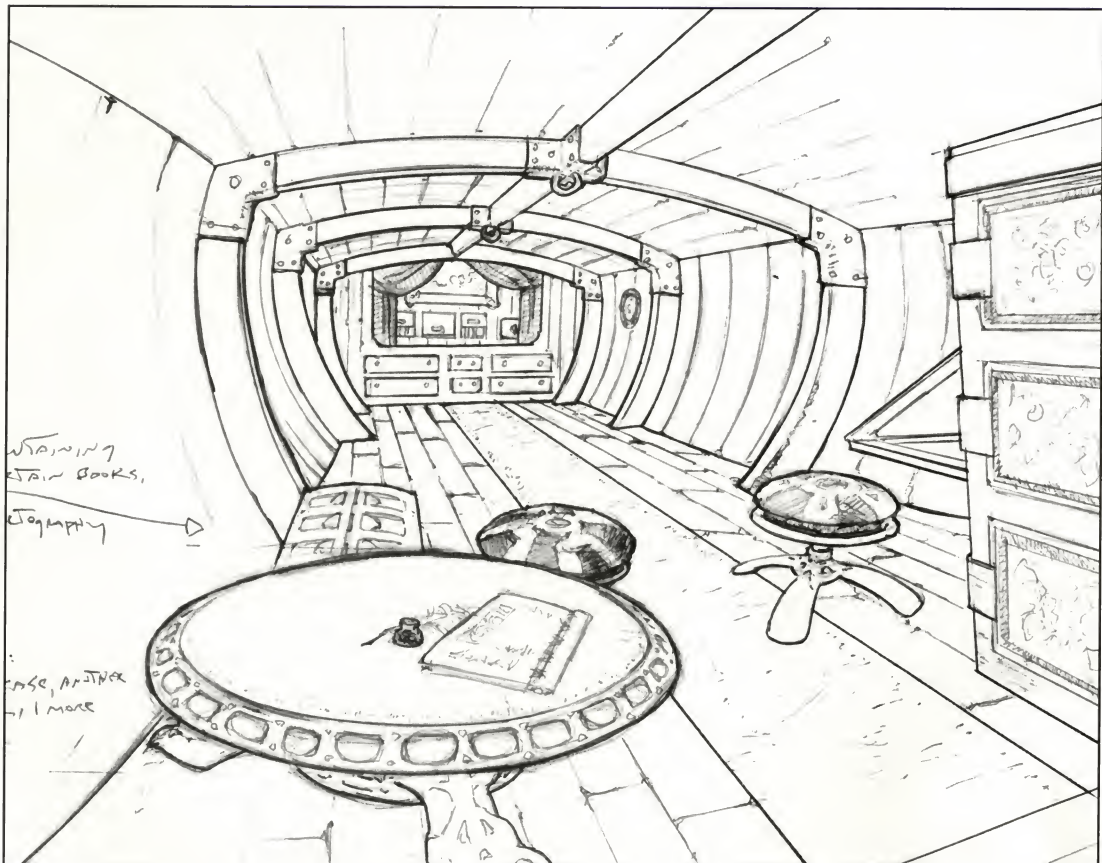
Moving from plane to plane isn't particularly easy. First one must apply a "sample" of the plane to which the shift drive can attune, much in the same way a tuning fork is used to bring a guitar into pitch. This "contagion," or alchemical infection, is then used to bring the drive into alignment with the desired destination, and power is applied to open the gate. It's a simple process fraught with a great deal of danger. In this instance the full weight of authority rests on the shoulders of the chief engineer. She has the power to stop the process at any point.



Top of page, the final design of *Weatherlight's* engine by Anthony Waters; above, alternate sketch for the Thran crystal chamber.



Below, the captain's cabin in a sketch by Anthony Waters. A person over six feet tall would find the bed at the end of the room cramped. *Right*, top-down schematic of the captain's cabin also by Anthony Waters.



The Captain's Study



Last of the officer's berths is the captain's cabin, sometimes called, with certain cheekiness, the "Great Cabin." This suggests a space the actual room cannot live up to. Sisay's quarters are the roomiest berth on the ship, though most of her sailors sleep in bunks slightly bigger than coffins.

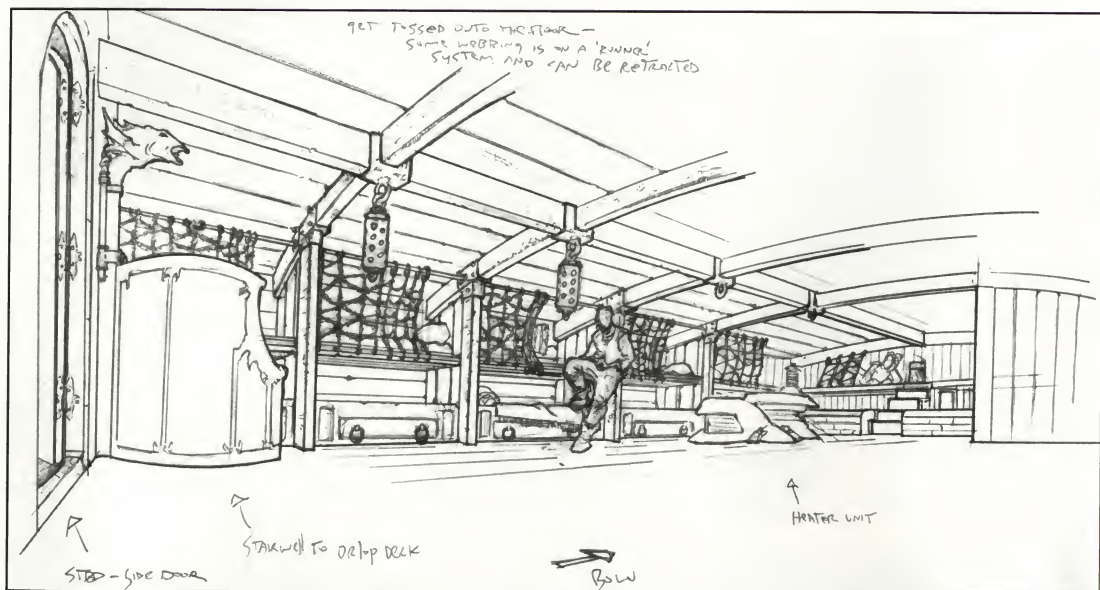
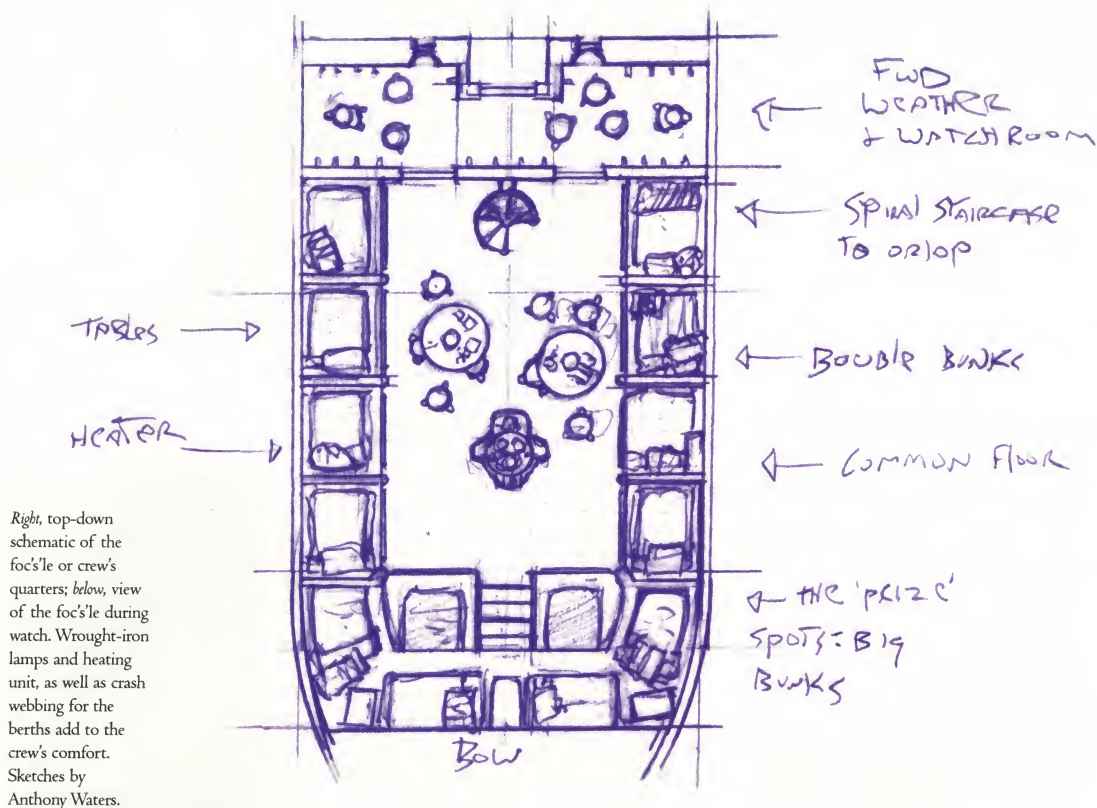
Sisay's drive to better understand the Legacy and gather its scattered elements together caused her to collect all manner of texts and gewgaws, which further take up space. When Gerrard assumed the captaincy to find Sisay, it was appropriate that he take over her berth, but he hasn't been able to bring himself to shift her belongings. Instead he's come to adopt the clutter as his

own, in part due to his feeling that Sisay's mess may contain clues to her whereabouts.

The captain's cabin on most ships of *Weatherlight's* size would include enough space for a small library and a table, or at least a secure place for alcohol. But *Weatherlight's* designers had other things in mind, such as the power plant and related machinery. The needs of the crew that would serve *Weatherlight* were clearly given little thought. Still, her captains have not let this deter them from finding—adding, if need be—niches and cubbyholes for their baubles and charts. Word has it that such personal items periodically appear in people's cabins, the calling cards of past residents.



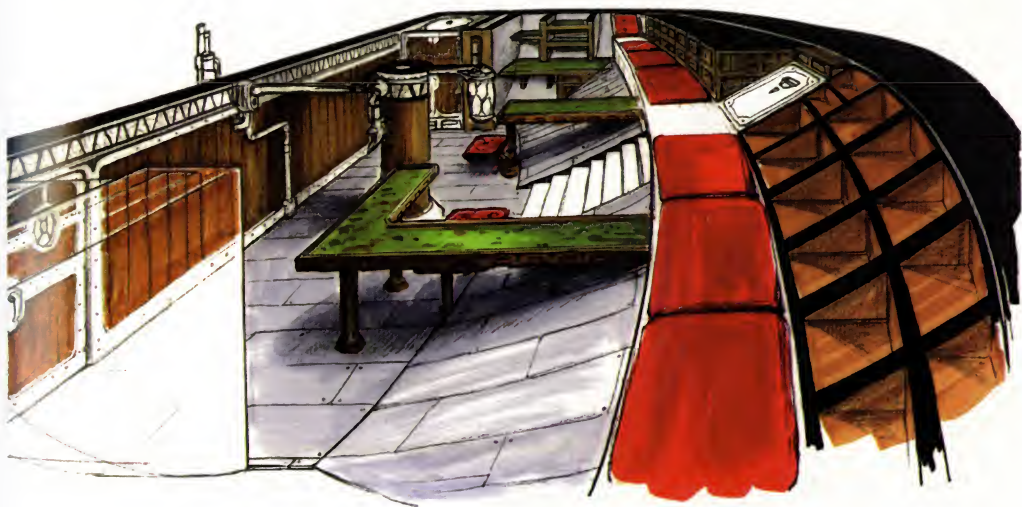
The Thran Tome fell into Sisay's hands and has been her bedtime reading material since well before Gerrard's arrival aboard the *Weatherlight*. Above right, Thran Tome by Donato Giancola; top of page, character study of Sisay by Mark Tedin; left, Thran Forge by Mark Poole.



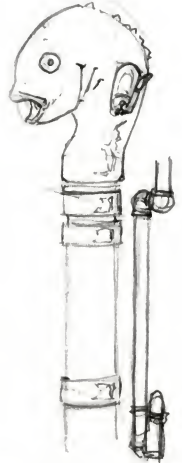
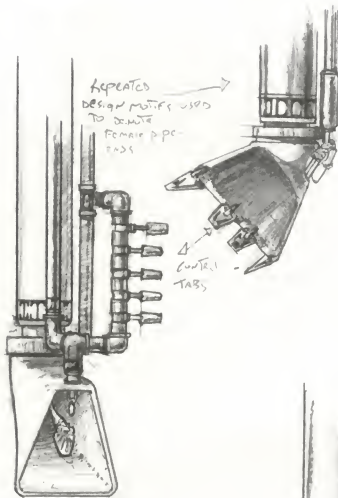
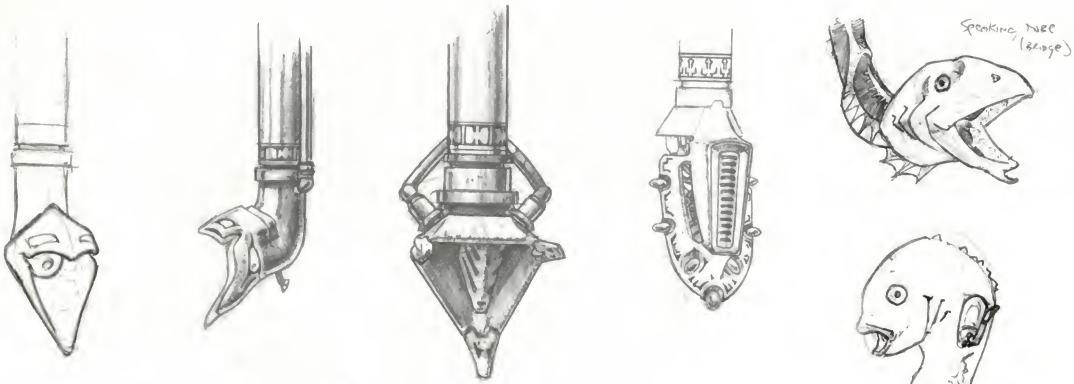
The Foc's'le

Near the ship's stem is the forecastle, more comonly pronounced as foc's'le, or crew's berths. Here's where many of the *Weatherlight's* crew members have their quarters, unlike most ships where they would be expected to sleep with the cargo. Recognizing their good fortune here tempers the crew's grumbling. It is kept warm and dry by the big heater that dominates the forward section. A standing room permits sailors to shed oilskins and boots before entering their quarters. There's even enough space in the center for tables. Off-watch deckhands cluster around these tables, playing cards or other games of chance.

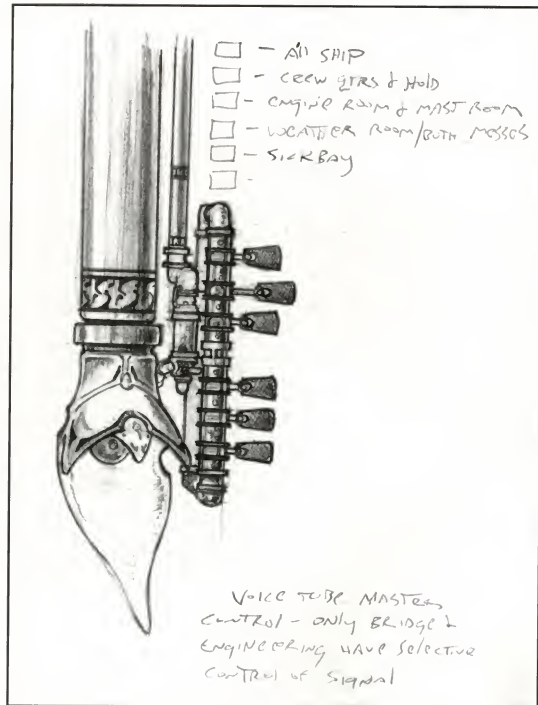
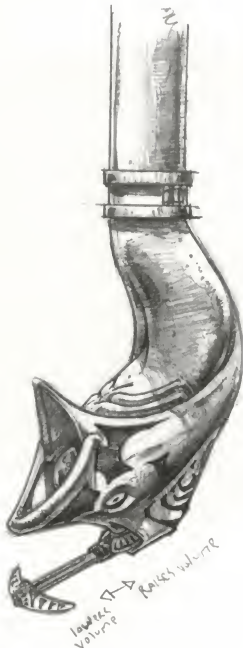
The usual cause of friction here is between those with seniority and those without. Directly below is a more cramped room that is neither as warm nor as comfortable as the foc's'le. Either is preferable to the hold, which is where low-ranking crew sleep. Comfort declines quickly, along with seniority. Sailors in the main room have a whole drawer for their kit. Those below them get a small chest. Meanwhile, in the hold, a sailor gets a hammock and lives with the hope that his kit's hiding place won't be found by rats or higher-ranking crewmates.



Above, Hanna's workshop perspective by Mark Tedin.

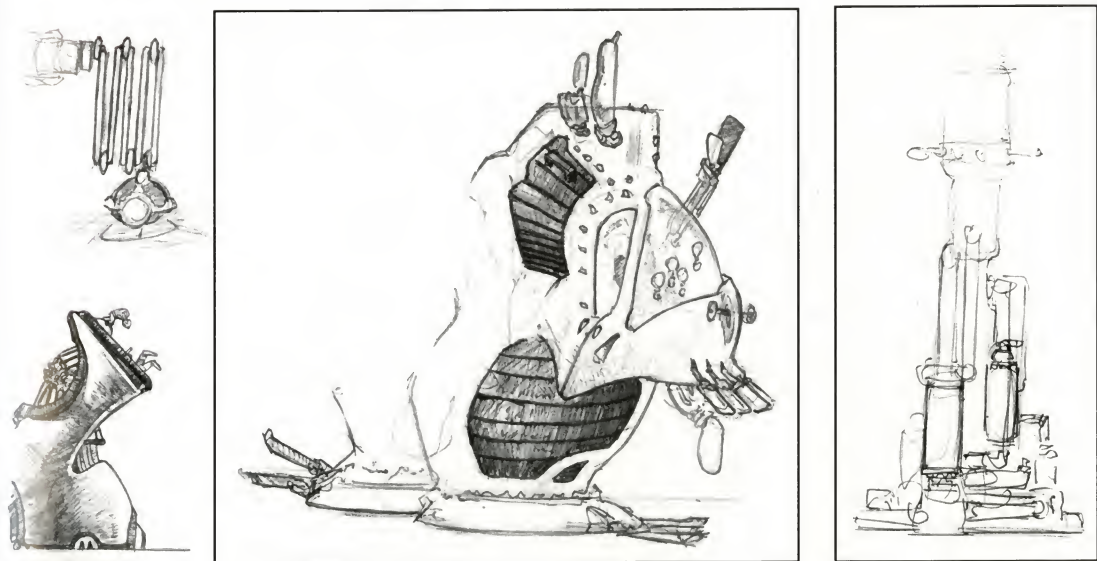


Weatherlight's communication system received significant design attention. A small crystal mounted into the throat of the tube amplifies sound and sends it forth. In the final design, levers mounted on the contraption permit signals to be sent to specific locations on the ship. Sketches by Anthony Waters.



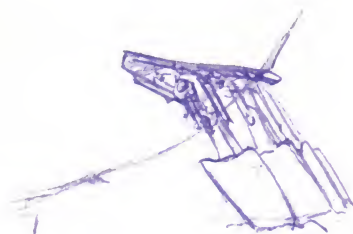
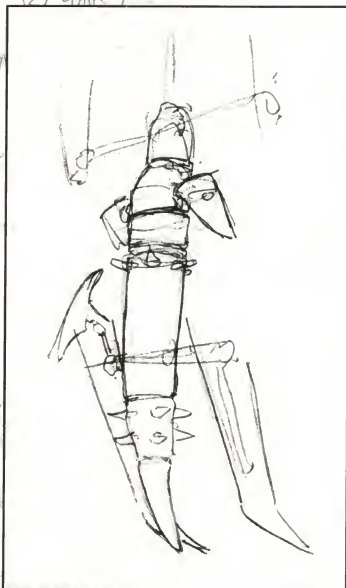


Examples of both early and later designs of *Weatherlight's* lesser gadgetry. Sketches by Anthony Waters.



- Sails would need magic
on something to provide rigid
air foil for flight
- Torque is going to
be really severe through
midsection - lots of
crossbracing will
be needed - what keeps
her nose up? -
- engine is propulsive
or what?

① wheel/Ho
② galley

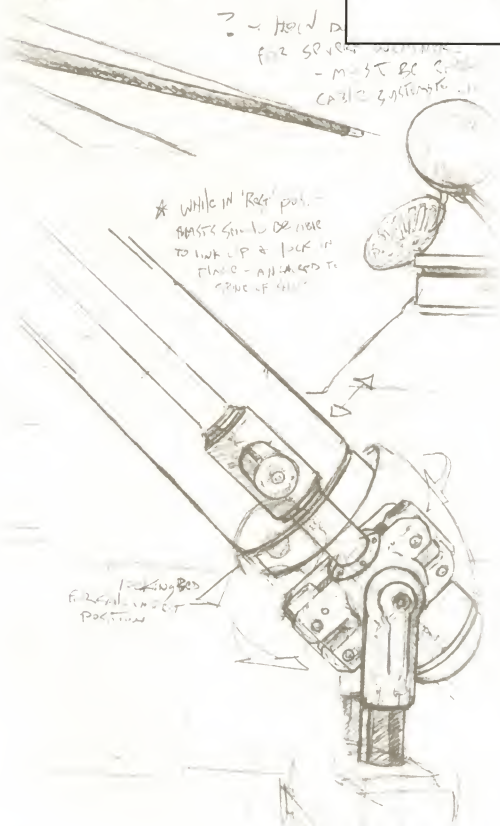


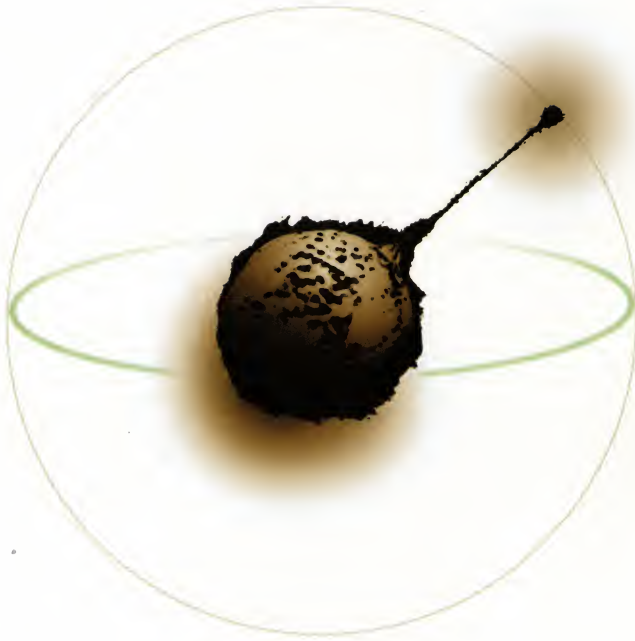
Weatherlight's ability to sail and fly makes her a unique machine. Few have ever witnessed her in flight. Those who have can't stop talking about how she lands. Over soil, the brass vanes that follow the lines of her hull are capable of telescoping out as individual landing spines. The vanes can't penetrate rock, and balancing on their tips like an overweight ballerina would hopelessly mangle the machinery.

The desire to conceal or diminish the profile of anchors and rudders has caused some odd compromises in *Weatherlight's* design. The anchor mechanism, for example, drops from the stern of the ship just above the engine exhaust manifold. This places the winch and chain between the decks just below the passengers' staterooms. Casting off in the early morning hours tends to rattle the teeth out of passengers' heads. Although this configuration doesn't affect the ship in any serious way, it is cause for a few additional stares.

Placement of her rudders also proved to be a problem for her designers. It has been suggested, often derisively, that *Weatherlight* was never meant to be a sailing vessel. Her hull has a poor cross-section for dealing with rough water; her vanes lie right on the waterline, making her prone to swamping. This awkward shape requires two rudders, each folded back like small wings next to the engine room, to permit the *Weatherlight* effective maneuverability.

Left, sketchbook page;
top of page right, rough
notions of the
Weatherlight's landing
gear; above, anchor by
Anthony Waters.





CHARACTERS
of
THE RATH CYCLE





Gerrard

Shortly after his birth Gerrard Capashen became the ward of Kondo, Sidar of the Triangle, brought to the sidar in the giant, scarred hands of Karn, the silver golem. Of Benalish descent, Gerrard was raised among the Jamuraans of the Sidar until his early teens, long enough to earn the hatred of his half-brother Vuel and witness the estrangement between Vuel and his father.

Karn, assigned to be Gerrard's guardian by his parents, eased some of the loneliness of these early years. Theirs was a kinship born of a shared sense of alienation; Gerrard didn't know where he had come from, and Karn couldn't—or wouldn't—say what his own origins were. Both eventually became victims of Vuel's cruelty.

When Vuel successfully stole a portion of the Legacy and managed to lure the golem away from the sidar, Kondo made a decision to distance Gerrard from the growing conflict. He sent the seventeen-year-old to Multani, an ancient maro-sorcerer, who willingly accepted the young man as a pupil. Here Gerrard befriended Rofellos, an elf from Llanowar, and Mirri, a cat warrior, also an orphan. Multani provided some hints as to his own origins, and their connection with a mysterious legend known as the Legacy.

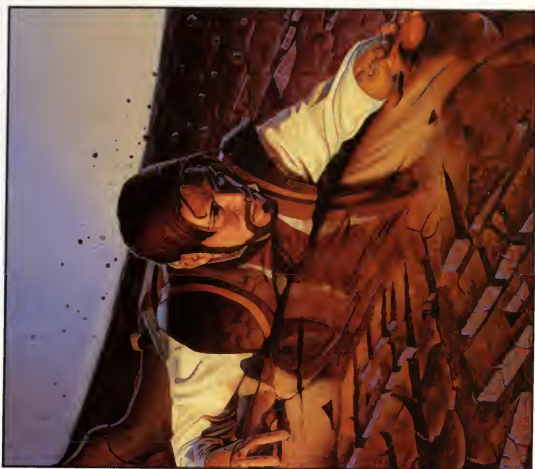
Vuel brought the conflict to Multani's doorstep in Gerrard's eighteenth year as the three students were entering their second year of tutelage under the maro-sorcerer. Multani forced his students to flee, then faced Vuel's forces alone. When Gerrard returned to his home of the past year it was in shambles, his tutor nowhere to be found.

Further trials awaited the young man. Vuel's war with the Sidar had fractured and finally destroyed his clan. Karn was gone. The Sidar was dead. A single thread remained to connect Gerrard with his past: a small hourglass pendant, a remnant of the fabled Legacy of which Multani had spoken. Gerrard and his companions left for the cities of Jamuraa.

This was just the beginning of Gerrard's contact with the Legacy. Later, he met Sisay and signed aboard the *Weatherlight*, yet another link with the Legacy. He abandoned his post on the *Weatherlight* and left to carve out his own path in Benalia.

Eventually the tug of the Legacy turned out to be too strong to overcome. When he learned that Sisay had been kidnapped by unknown hands, Gerrard assumed the captaincy of the ship and began pursuit, steering the *Weatherlight* into the heart of Rath.

Gerrard possesses many characteristics of the stereotypical hero: He's a handsome and charismatic man. When motivated he generates an infectious intensity, sweeping his crewmates into his cause. He can match his words with actions; three years in the Benalish military provided him with a broad knowledge of weapons and warcraft. Maintaining a caustic sense of humor even in the thick



The Temper card was about the hardening of a persona as a result of battle. Gerrard wasn't supposed to be in the picture based on the original description of the card. I suggested we use Gerrard in that piece for a visual of him looking cool, looking tough—Gerrard post-battle and looking intimidating.”—Matt Wilson



of battle has earned Gerrard a well-deserved reputation as a commander who is cool under the worst of conditions.

Even so, Gerrard's weakness stems from the existence of the Legacy itself. There have been times when the weight of his alleged destiny has been more than he seems able or willing to bear. His efforts to escape his fate have had the opposite effect and have placed the young warrior in the unenviable position of fighting three battles at once. Earning the renewed loyalty of his crew, the respect of his friends, and Sisay's freedom has put him on a path where the final victim may well be himself.



Gerrard has little respite from the burden of the Legacy. His guardian, Karn, himself an artifact of the Legacy, carries other elements within his metal belly and complicates things more by being a friend and ally. Gerrard's parents were driven to give him up because of the Legacy. Sisay, the friend whose shoes he wears now as captain, was determined to use him in any way that would bring the Legacy to wreak vengeance on those who destroyed her home. All of those he's met, fought, or worked with have in one way or another been elements of the forces in overarching conflict for the future of Dominaria. One can understand if the young warrior has, among his prayers for strength, added the occasional one for anonymity.



Above left, Maniacal Rage by Pete Venters; above, concept sketch of Gerrard as an adult and; below left, at 15 years-of-age, by Anson Maddocks; Null Rod by Anson Maddocks.

Facing page, Gerrard, portrayed during different moments in his hunt for Sisay. Clockwise from bottom, Temper by Matt Wilson; Shifting Wall by Michael Sutfin; Gerrard's Battle Cry by Val Mayerik; Hero's Destiny by Pete Venters.



"I thought that if Sisay was going to be in a prison for months on end she would lose weight. She's athletic, so she would probably lose it in her curves and look a little more fierce. What she loses in softness she makes up for in intensity, along with a few bruises and scratches."
—Mark Tedin



Left, more of Mark Tedin's character studies of Sisay. These show her aged by captivity; *below*, Reins of Power, Sisay in the grip of Volrath's mental control, by Colin MacNeil.

Facing page above, Mark Tedin's character study of Sisay; *below*, Ancestral Knowledge by Colin MacNeil.



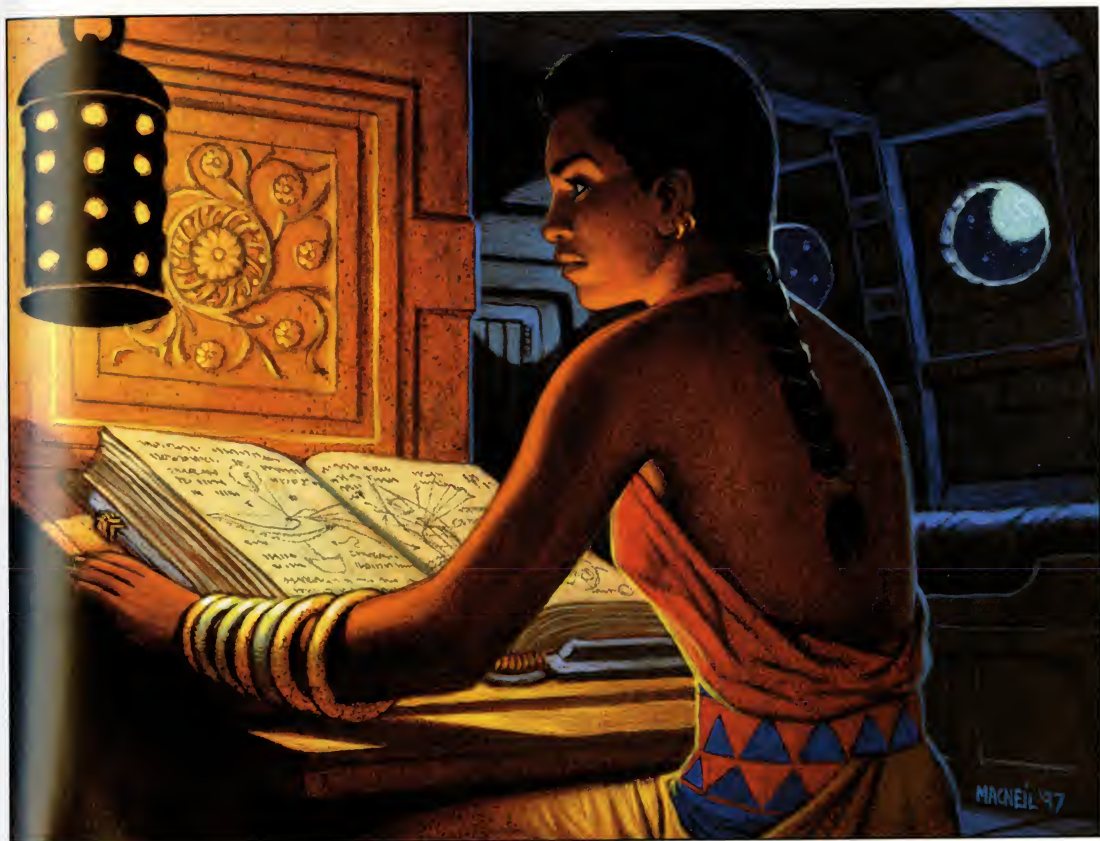
Sisay was the first captain of the *Weatherlight* and remains the crew's favorite because of her confidence and determination. Prior to her kidnapping, she commanded *Weatherlight's* crew in a search for the elements of the Legacy, a task entrusted to her by her parents. She knows more about the Legacy than any one mortal has in centuries.

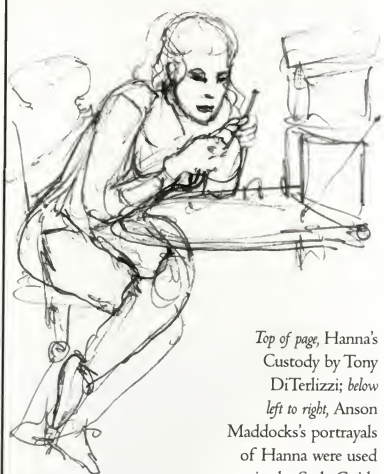
Sisay was reborn the day her village died, when her search for the Legacy became a means to avenge the senseless deaths of her family. Since that day the role of revenant and the need to fight the good fight have become inextricably mixed.

'Driven' is a word that epitomizes Sisay. Her appetite for knowledge keeps her awake and reading for days on end and has taken her places and exposed her to risks that would leave any sane person shaking her head in amazement. Once she could have described the difference between her wants and needs, but the line between her desire for revenge and loyalty to the truth of the Legacy is now so blurred she is no longer able to separate them.

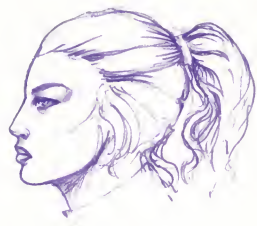


The Legacy is like a sword in her hand, the weapon she will use to avenge the death of her family. Sisay isn't above coercion to gain what she wants, either when recruiting crewmen or pursuing pieces of the Legacy. Strangely, using her own regal looks to achieve this end rarely occurs to her. Her drive never undermines her dignity, even if it has, at times, clouded her judgment.





Top of page, Hanna's Custody by Tony DiTerlizzi; below left to right, Anson Maddock's portrayals of Hanna were used in the Style Guide as reference; above, character sketch by Mark Tedin.



Hanna

Hanna inherited a gift for dealing with machinery. She has successfully battled *Weatherlight's* bizarre collection of Thran-derived gadgetry into a state of grumbling servitude during her tenure aboard the ship. This is no small achievement for a twenty-five-year-old woman from Tolaria, an island long considered a myth; this ability is her calling.

Orim and Hanna both went to university in Argive, where they met and became fast friends. Orim's skills were in the arena of politics and diplomacy; Hanna had a gift for making machines work. Hanna was a tomboy as a child, more at home with wrenches and manuals than in the company of others. Her relationship with Orim and her position as *Weatherlight's* chief engineer have done much to mature her. She is one of Sisay's greatest allies in the quest for the Legacy. Their shared obsession to crack the secrets of the Thran Tome was strengthened by Gerrard's departure for Benalia.



Clockwise from top left,
Style Guide sketch by
Anson Maddocks;
Treasure Trove by
Michael Sutfin; and
Pursuit of Knowledge
by Tony DiTerlizzi.

"Many characters were established before we began work on them. It was our job to interpret them stylistically as a group. We tightened up their looks and brought a cohesive style to them."

—Anson Maddocks

Mirri



Mirri's life hasn't been easy by any standards. She was rejected by her own kind because her eyes of differing colors marked her as an ill omen to her race. Mirri's life nearly ended before it began.

Her fate turned around, however, when she was placed under Multani's wing and she befriended Gerrard and Rofellos, companions who helped see her through years of troubles. She was Gerrard's confidant until the loss of Rofellos, when they went their separate ways. Gerrard left the *Weatherlight* for Benalia and the sanctuary of the Capashen name. Mirri headed for Llanowar to bear the news of the elf's death to his family. There she remained for three years. Mirri and Gerrard were reunited when Gerrard's pursuit of Sisay brought

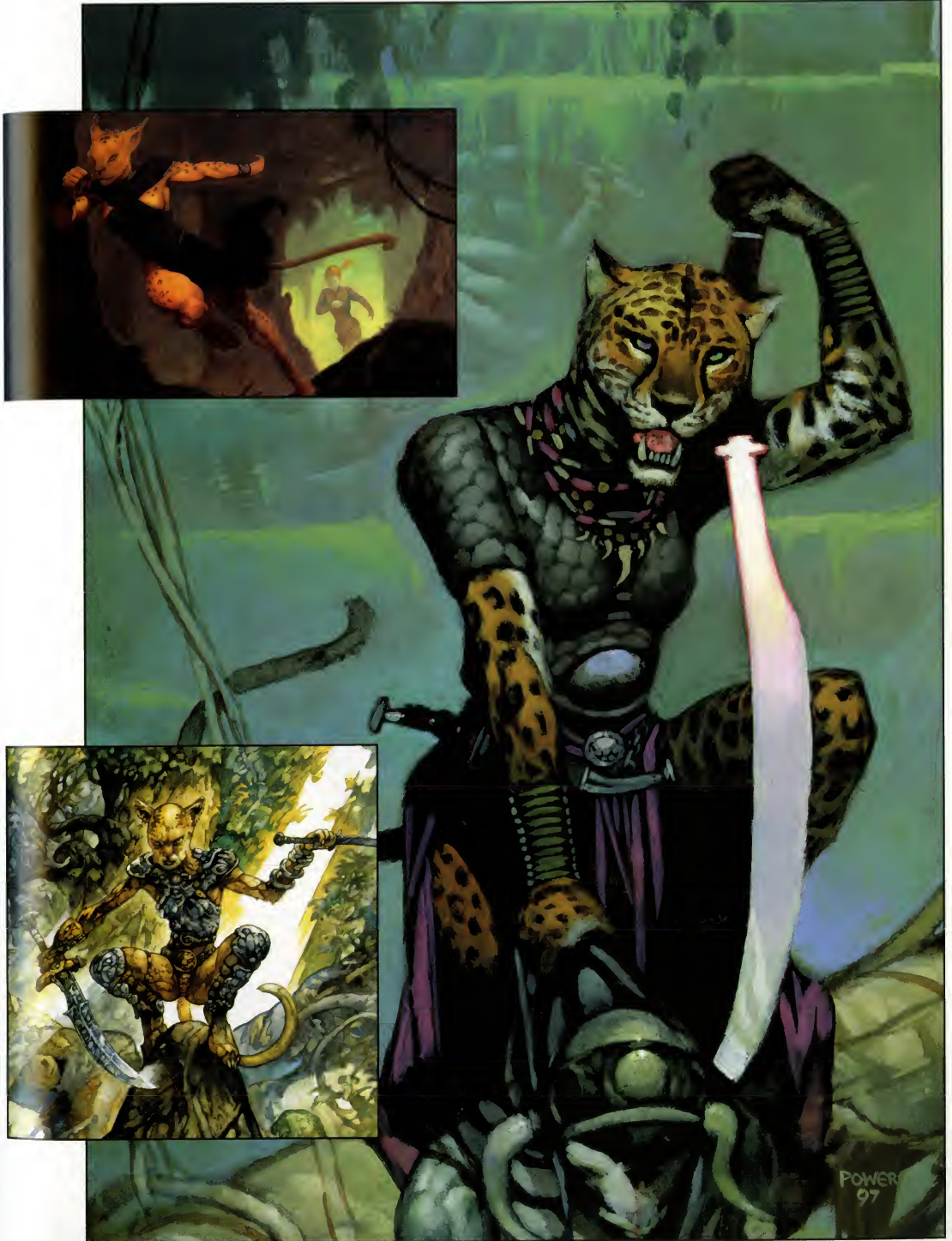
him to Llanowar. She jumped at placing her hands on *Weatherlight's* helm again.

Mirri is no fool. She sees things plainly and tends to speak as she sees, regardless of how her words may be interpreted. A creature of instinct, she has the fastest reflexes of anyone on the *Weatherlight* and has no apprehension about demonstrating her speed. Outside of a fight, she's an unflinchingly linear thinker. This has led to a certain amount of brawling, on and off the ship. Picking fights is Mirri's form of exercise. Unfortunately, abstract humor tends to leave her confused, frustrated, and irritated, in that order. Mirri functions like a cable under tension, always eager for the prospect of action.

Upper left and right, Mirri Style Guide references drawn by Anson Maddocks; far left, Leap by Kev Walker; below, Mirri Cat Warrior by Daren Bader.



Facing page, *The Duelist*™ cover by Dermot Power; upper inset, Mirri's Guile by Brom; lower inset, Mirri by Richard Kane-Ferguson.





Clockwise from bottom left, Torment by Paolo Parente; three pieces from the Style Guide show Tahngarth's malformed wrists, horns, and the pattern of his injuries, by Anthony Waters; Tahngarth's Vanguard card by Pete Venters; Tahngarth in a quieter moment as painted by Pete Venters; a full-body shot of the remade Tahngarth rendered for the Style Guide by Anthony Waters; Seething Anger by Val Mayerik.



Tahngarth



Tahngarth loves the sound of his title. It comes off his tongue with practiced ease and unconcealed pride: "I'm first mate aboard *Weatherlight*." One expects certain things out of first mates, and Tahngarth delivers on all fronts with vigor. He lacks patience, decorum, tact. He's easily angered and free with his words when enraged. A bellow from Tahngarth can allegedly be heard from one end of the ship to the other. He sees his authority over the crew of *Weatherlight* as absolute and behaves accordingly. In short, Sisay found him to be the perfect first mate.

Sisay impressed the young minotaur with her brass on one of her early voyages to Talruum, when she dared to represent herself in a fight with one of his own kind. Tangarth, feeling a mere human would have no chance against one of his kind, declared himself her champion and defeated her opponent. He was invited aboard *Weatherlight* shortly thereafter, where it was Sisay's turn to be impressed with his abilities. After the death of Sisay's previous first mate, Meida, Tahngarth immediately rose to the challenge of commanding Sisay's crew, proving capable of earning her loyalty and respect.

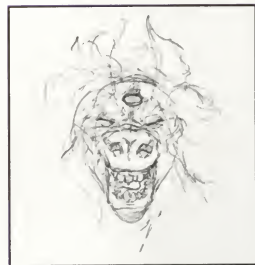
Tahngarth has the ego of someone who's been told that he's handsome a few too many times. He has two huge fists, bearing the marks of regular use, to back

up his vanity. "When in doubt, punch it out," is an example of Tahngarth's thick, brutal lyricism, and labels him as linear a thinker as Mirri.

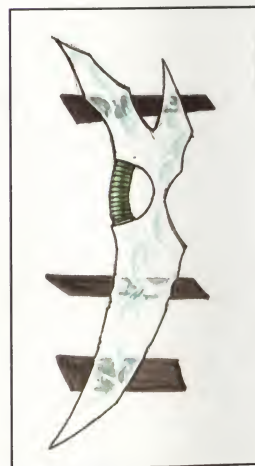
These two often seem on the verge of collision. The tension was increased considerably when Gerrard gave Mirri the position of lieutenant, a nebulous post that has left the minotaur and cat warrior wondering exactly who has authority over whom. This professional jealousy has separated them since Mirri first set foot onboard the ship. An unsbtle game of physical one-upsmanship is played during off hours. Neither will admit that the insults and competition have grown out of a shared sense of admiration.

Common points on the black side of the ledger relate them to each other. Like Mirri, Tahngarth is gruff about his affections, but his loyalty is equally ferocious. Sisay knew this early on, though she never formally tested it. Gerrard knows that when he left for Benalia he pushed past the minotaur's threshold. The test of their friendship has been their trip to Rath and the sacrifices demanded to rescue Sisay.

Tahngarth is now a scarred and blistered patchwork of flesh, pelt, and metal intermingled. Vanity has been reworked into an agonized bitterness that is slowly consuming him.



Top, close-up of Tahngarth's hand; middle, a character sketch of him laughing; below, Tahngarth's weapon. Sketches by Anthony Waters.



Squee



Somehow it seems natural that on a ship with a silver golem, a minotaur first mate, a cat warrior, and humans from nearly every ethnic flavor in Dominaria's stew of nations, *Weatherlight's* cabin boy should be a goblin. An intelligent, even occasionally brilliant goblin, no less, is Squee. The fact that he hasn't yet been tossed off the ship by a furious crew member is some small testament to his brainpower.

Despite his shortcomings, Squee has learned to make himself useful, becoming well acquainted with the obscure corners and veins of *Weatherlight's* skeleton. His willingness to plunge into her cramped,

greasy depths has netted him some grudging respect, although he has been chased there, too. He knows *Weatherlight* as well as anybody, Sisay included.

Squee owes his presence on the ship to Sisay's good graces. As a youth Squee managed to prevent Sisay and her crew from falling into the clutches of his tribe. It was an act of extraordinary aplomb and cleverness on his part, a coup he's been trying to replicate ever since. If he can overcome his yellow streak, continue to avoid the boots and hooves aimed his way, and is extraordinarily lucky, he just might manage to save the day again sometime.



Clockwise from bottom,
Hidden Retreat by
Terese Nielsen; full
body and head studies
of Squee for the Style
Guide by Anson
Maddocks; Squee's
toy drawn for the
Style Guide, by
Anthony Waters.

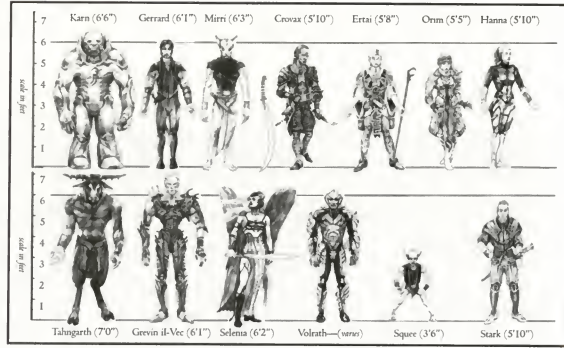


Below, *The Duelist* cover painting by Jeff Miracola; inset, Squee's Toy by Heather Hudson.

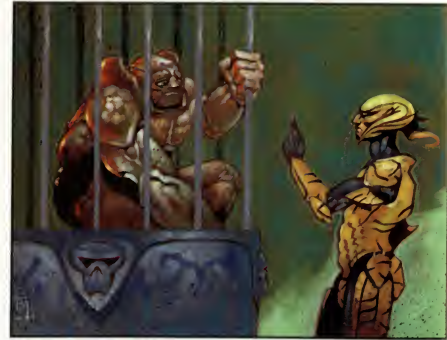




Right, Karn head study by Mark Tedin; far right, the Weatherlight crew by Mark Tedin and Anson Maddocks.



Left to right, Karn in profile, front and back, as illustrated by Mark Tedin for the Style Guide.



Left, Imps Taunt by Colin McNeil; above, Propaganda by Jeff Miracola.



Karn

Karn ranks as the most physically powerful pacifist any of *Weatherlight's* crew has encountered. Karn is scarred by the memory of a life he took through clumsiness. It haunts him still, though decades have passed. This sense of a blood debt has made him pledge never to raise a hand in anger against anyone ever again. Yet he's also Gerrard's protector. Having a warrior as a ward is something of a challenge for a pacifist. It's becoming harder and harder to find nonviolent ways out of trouble as the chase to rescue Sisay progresses.

Karn is a tireless worker. His massive ball-peen limbs can shift cargo well past the point when others would

drop from exhaustion. Karn is a miracle of engineering: unhinging his jaw reveals an interior space that can hold a surprising number of artifacts. Some of his inner workings are curiously similar to features of *Weatherlight* herself. Karn maintains he can even communicate with the ship. There have been enough instances where he's pointed out problems in places he can't readily reach or see, that Hanna's come to take him seriously, even if she isn't certain what to make of his abilities.

Karn's innate resistance to positive thinking is his only flaw. As much as Gerrard loves the huge golem, there are times when he wishes Karn had an off toggle.



Clockwise from bottom,
Pacifism by Adam
Rex; Sift by Pete
Venters and Karn's
Vanguard card by
Anthony Waters.

Orim



Orim's role aboard the *Weatherlight* is more varied than any of her fellow officers. She's been called upon to be the captain's translator and a supervising tailor, in addition to her role as the ship's doctor and quartermaster.

Orim and Hanna signed aboard the *Weatherlight* at the same time. Sisay found niches for them to fill as they revealed their talents. Orim's organizational skills placed her in prime position for the quartermaster's post, keeping track of everything from the ship's stores to the crew's payroll. She has risen to this role, taking an almost maternal interest in the well-being of ship and crew. Orim rarely relates her own opinions on anything, maintaining the veneer of the diplomat, prompting the opinion among the crew that Orim speaks kindly and listens politely but reveals little of herself in return.

Above, Style Guide sketch by Mark Tedin.

Above right, Havoc by Donato Giancola;
middle, Samite Blessing by Rebecca Guay; below right, Orim's Prayer by Donato Giancola; below, Orim's Vanguard card by Rebecca Guay.





Ertai is one of the youngest officers on the ship and among the least respected. His big mouth and lack of temperance often overshadow his talent for magic. He has a tendency to express his opinion in ways that rub others raw, especially Hanna. Barrin, Hanna's father and Ertai's mentor, saw to it that his protégé was given a post aboard the *Weatherlight*. His presence



on the ship is a constant reminder of Barrin's undisguised displeasure in his daughter's decision to join the crew. Ertai's ignorance and arrogance have furthered this rift.

Attitude notwithstanding, his gifts as a mage come to the fore dramatically when he helps the *Weatherlight* escape Rath, a short-lived triumph for the wizard. *Weatherlight* gets away; Ertai doesn't.



Clockwise from left, Shadow Rift by Adam Rex; Ertai, Wizard Adept by Terese Nielsen; Style Guide reference for Ertai by Mark Tedin; Meditate by Susan Van Camp.



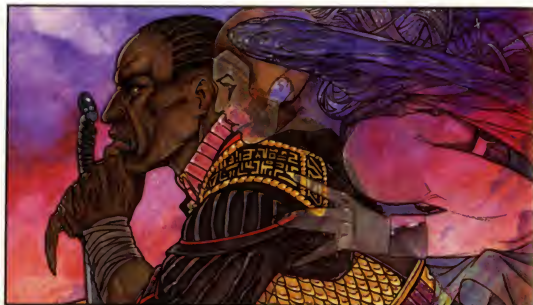


The shared opinion among *Weatherlight's* crew is that Crovax too often uses big words to describe small problems. There is no doubt that the nobleman from Urborg is prone to excessively dramatic speech. In his defense, Crovax is a man of grand, if tarnished, passions. The words he uses fit the size of his obsessions.

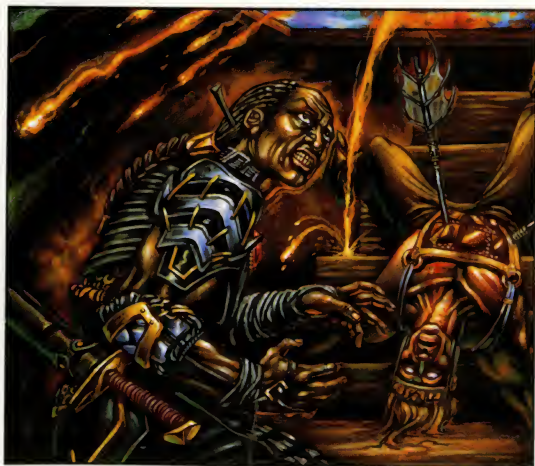
His primary obsession is the angel Selenia. The great irony is, he himself released her, at the same time causing the destruction of everything he had held dear—his family and his home. Other forces assisted in his first steps down this dark path, powers that moved the Rathian pawns Morinfen and Gallowbraid to attack his ancestral home. His only concern now is to regain the angel whom he loves, regardless of the cost. To his way of thinking there simply isn't anything left to lose.



Above, Style Guide references of Crovax, drawn by Mark Tedin.



Above, *Whispers of the Muse*, by Quentin Hoover; below, *The Duelist* magazine cover; bottom left, Crovax's Vanguard card by Ron Spencer.



Starke



Above, Starke's Vanguard card by Donato Giancola; below, Starke of Rath, by Dan Frazier.

Starke's personality, like his name, conceals more than it declares. *Il-Vec* is his surname, the *il* marking him an outcast of his own people. Starke is a rotten little man from any perspective, parading around under a shifting mantle of loyalties. At present he's hoping that his latest gambit, a shaky alliance with the crew of the ship whose captain he betrayed, won't unravel before he's had the chance to get his daughter to safety. Truth to tell, he barely knows Takara, but she's his last connection to anything legitimate, a fact that keeps him from discarding or betraying her as he has so many others.

Starke has the demeanor and ugly humor of a man who has spent his life engineering ways to stab people in the back and escape intact. This

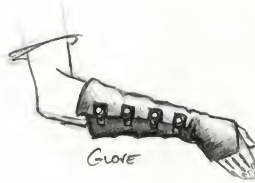
requires a quick wit and a mouth to match. Starke is naturally glib, a practiced liar from necessity. Rath, his birthplace, isn't a place someone can leave without considerable risk. Starke paid dearly the first time he fled. By guiding the *Weatherlight* to Rath, he hopes to gain a step on Volrath, rescue his daughter, and escape unscathed.



Above, Style Guide renderings of Starke by Mark Tedin.



Takara



Starke permitted himself one brief moment of weakness in his forty-four years. For reasons of mutual protection Starke sought to keep his liason with a Dal woman secret, but matters grew complex when she gave birth to Starke's child, Takara. Consequently he fled the plane of Rath shortly after her birth. His lover reared the girl in her own community, where Takara grew to adulthood knowing little of her father.

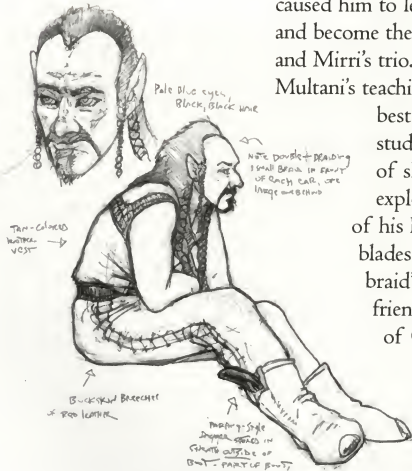
Evidently some traits lie in the blood; while Takara doesn't look much like her father, she has inherited his ability to scheme. Those skills were put to a different use than Starke would have wished when Takara became a strategist for the Dal's resistance movement. This eventually led to her capture by the Evincar of Rath, making her the unwilling link in the chain that connects Volrath, Starke, and the *Weatherlight*.

Top, examples of Dal weaponry; left, Takara Style Guide reference by Matt Wilson.

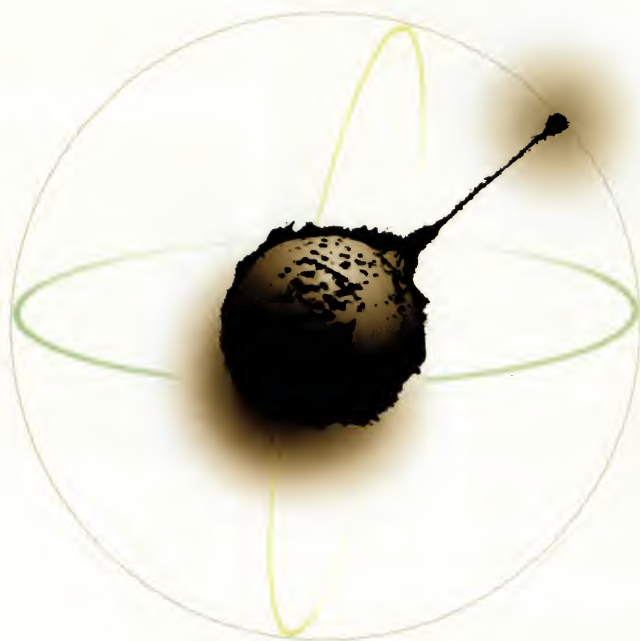


Rofellos

Rofellos developed a wanderer's nature early on in life. He never revealed what caused him to leave his home in Llanowar and become the third member of Gerrard and Mirri's trio. Magic was at the core of Multani's teachings, and Rofellos was the best of the maro-sorcerer's student's, showing a depth of skill he would never fully explore in the short course of his life. He died under the blades of Morinfen and Gallowbraid's forces, defending his friends during the sacking of Crovax's family estate.



Left and right, Rofellos Style Guide material for Dark Horse Comics by Anthony Waters.



The
VILLAINS



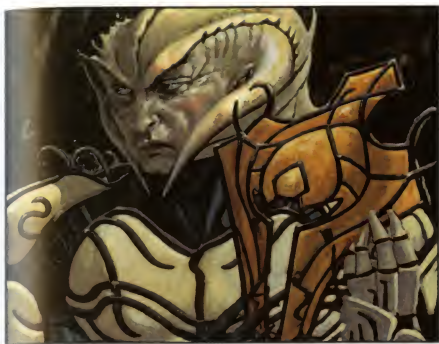
"I wanted to create an exotic character, not angry in the traditional villain sense, where he's hell-bent on cruelty, but more of a gloating power, very pleased with himself. The only thing that really sets him off is any threat to his arrogance. Volrath is an extremely arrogant character." —Anson Maddocks



Clockwise from top left, Volrath Vanguard card, by Anson Maddocks; Volrath's Curse by Daren Bader; Spinal Graft by Ron Spencer.



Left, Contemplation by Brom; right, references of Volrath, as a child and an adult, by Anson Maddocks.



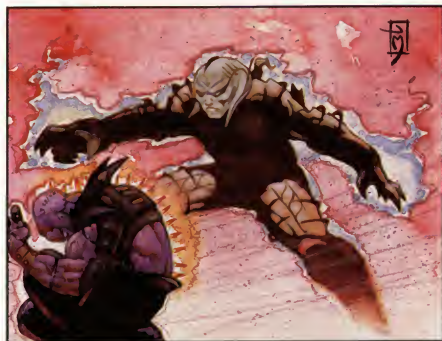
Volrath



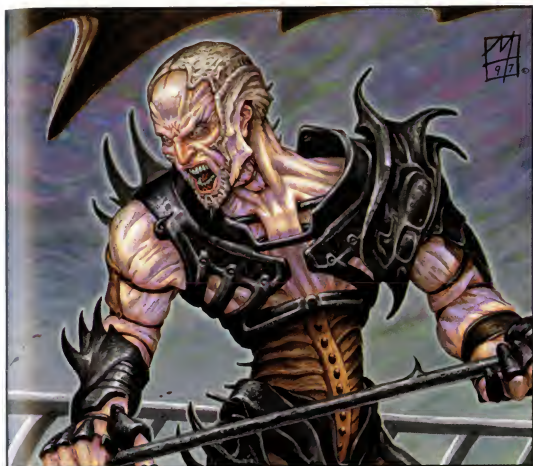
Even as the young human named Vuel, Volrath was a man of extremes. Nothing satisfied him; nothing was ever quite big enough. Impediments were always seen as enormous, requiring actions of equal scale to remove. He fueled his need for conflict with a jealous hatred of his step-brother, Gerrard, but the scope expanded to include his father, Kondo, then his tribe. Their annihilation remains a failure in his mind, since it failed to encompass the young Benalian. Unwittingly, it was the Legacy that opened Vuel to the idea of power on a greater scale. Pursuit of global conquest briefly distracted him from his obsession for Gerrard's death. Time, the rule of the shadow-plane of Rath, and his ascension to envincar has brought his focus back to the man he loathes the most. Volrath has come to understand that he and his step-brother were always meant to come into direct conflict.

Volrath remains a creature of extremes, though he is more mature and in better control of his public persona. He is a shapeshifter, a wizard of the flesh and mind at the peak of his skill. As envincar he applies his talents to the minds and bodies of others; the Stronghold is littered with the survivors of his brutal experimentation. Privately his emotions still swing in arcs that keep his staff in a state of perpetual terror. A fit of anger for Volrath is a storm that leaves a train of broken, misshapen forms in its wake. Volrath, a schemer of interlocking plots, a tyrant with limitless appetites, has a disturbing degree of interest in the unspeakable ways in which a soul can be tortured.

Above left, Helm of Possession by Janet Aulisio; top right, Style Guide reference by Anson Maddocks; right, Fevered Convulsions by Jeff Miracola; below, Necrologia by Brom.





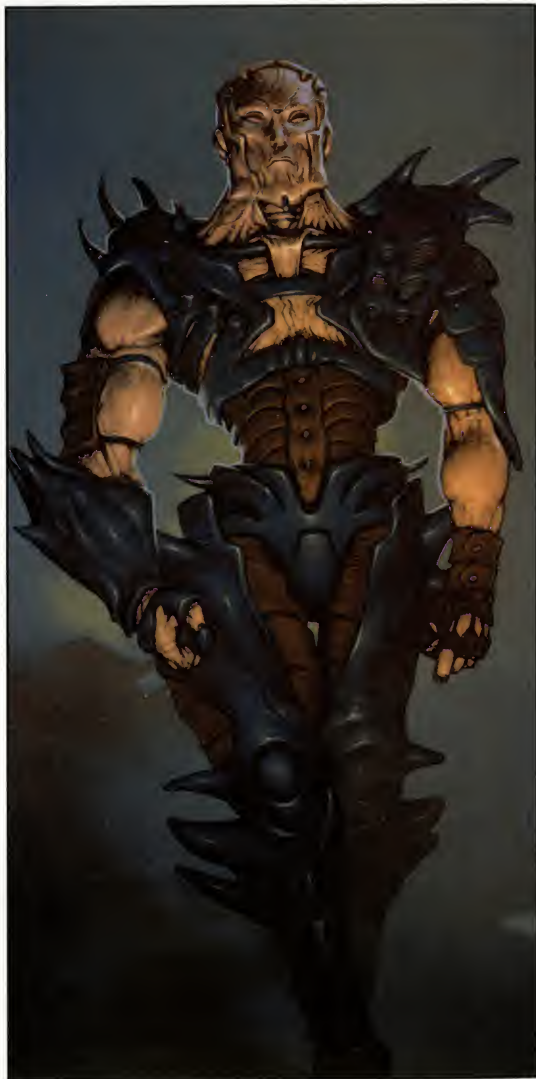


Greven il-Vec



Few of Volrath's officers could have as many grievances against an employer as Greven. His master saw fit to rearrange the exiled Vec's anatomy, brutally transforming him into an armored, pseudomechanical second-in-command. Greven's essence is now intertwined and supported by a spine of black mimetic alloy that answers Volrath's every whim. One ugly thought from Volrath, and Greven is reduced to a twitching pile of impotent rage.

This kind of treatment tends to undermine a person's ego. Greven has responded by pouring his hatred into the helpless moggs and Dal under his command. He's every bit as brutal, if not as methodical, as his master, taking his post as captain of the *Predator* and first in line of succession to the position of evincar as a means to wreak havoc upon the *Weatherlight* crew. One day, very carefully, he intends to turn all his rage back on his master, with heavy interest added.



Clockwise from top left,
Greven Vanguard card,
and concept sketch by
Mark Tedin;
Commander Greven
il-Vec, by Kev Walker;
Style Guide reference
by Mark Tedin.

Facing page: center, *The Duelist* magazine
cover by Paolo Parente; inset left,
Hand to Hand by Carl Frank; inset
right, Hatred by Brom.



Selenia



Top of page, Style Guide renderings by Mark Tedin; above, Selenia's profile and sword by Anson Maddocks.

Once Selenia was a beautiful thing, an heirloom of Crovax's family generated to guard over the family's Urborg estate. Crovax nursed a secret obsession for the guardian angel, summoning the armored nymph in seclusion, tentatively establishing a relationship he could never quite bring himself to consummate. It probably wasn't possible while she was bound to her duties. It may never have been possible. Crovax's craving for her may have woven so thick a screen of dreams in his head that reality never had a chance to penetrate.

What feelings, if any, that the angel actually had for her master will never be known. She came to fulfill her purpose, driving off the forces of Gallowbraid and Morinfen, though not in time to save Crovax's father. Desperate for her affections, Crovax freed her on the spot, with the blood of his relatives still warm on the ground.

Tragedies have a tendency to breed further pain. Crovax freed Selenia only to see her taken away and made into a weapon as tainted as she once was pure. He joined *Weatherlight's* quest to save Sisay in the hopes that this mission and his desire to find Selenia would somehow coincide. Shortly after arriving on Rath, Crovax glimpsed

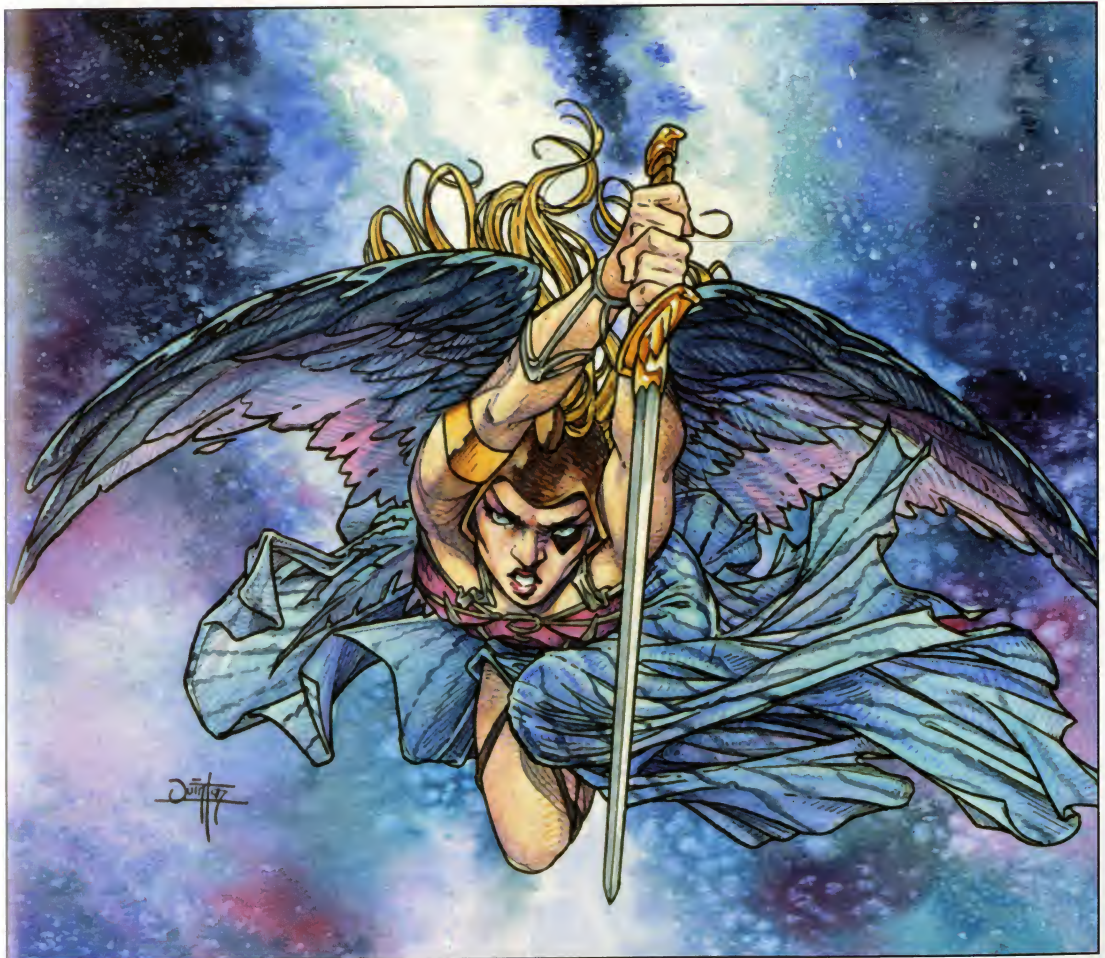
Selenia briefly while below decks. The event paralyzed him beneath the ship while his companions were fighting an onslaught of moggs above. The chain of events that began in the jungles Urborg ended on Rath. Crovax stepped over a threshold when he entered Rath. It is there he lost both his angel and his soul if, in fact, he ever had one.



Right, Style Guide version of Selenia by Anson Maddocks; left, loose renderings by Mark Tedin explore what Selenia may have looked like before she was ensnared by Volrath.



Facing page, top left, Selenia Dark Angel by Matt Wilson; top right, Power Sink by Jeff Miracola; lower right, Selenia Vanguard card by Quentin Hoover.



Maraxus of Keld

Below, The Duelist cover by Adrian Smith; lower right, Maraxus Vanguard card by Matt Wilson.

The Keldon Warlords were created in a bid to generate the definitive soldier, a creature who could command the rage in others. Maraxus of Keld defined this archetype. He was a giant among his kind, capable of controlling and focusing more massed fury than any of his predecessors. This perfection made him more than powerful; it made him impossible to tame. The Witch Kings of Keld probably breathed a

collective sigh of relief upon hearing of Maraxus's death. He was the ultimate example of their craft, thereby placing him outside the realm of their control.

He turned from his masters while a young adult and struck out on his own, eventually commanding the fealty of the sawtooth ogres, the most bloodthirsty of their breed. He used them to terrorize a whole region, during which time he came into the service of Volrath. Maraxus had captured the turncoat Starke during the sacking of a high mountain estate. Starke shifted sides and threw in with Volrath, convincing Maraxus that he could assist in the capture of Gerrard and the *Weatherlight*. This in turn led to a confrontation in which Starke chose to switch sides yet again, robbing Maraxus of his life in order to ensure a berth on the *Weatherlight* for its trip to Rath.





Morinfen

Morinfen and Gallowbraid were soulmates of a sort even the most polluted mind wouldn't willingly entertain. They differed in the ways they preferred to partake of their private vices. Morinfen conducted his crimes far from prying eyes, aided by the ability to fly.

Morinfen and his partner were responsible for the steady attrition of Crovax's family, as well as the final slaughter that destroyed what was left. It was slow work and, by Morinfen's standards, dull.

Morinfen by Carl Critchlow.



Gallowbraid

It's said that falling into the reach of Gallowbraid is the most vile embrace imaginable this side of hell. A creature of simple and ghastly tastes, he was in the employ of Volrath for some time. Gallowbraid's chief duty was the destruction of everything Crovax ever held dear. He and his partner Morinfen did just that, burning Crovax's home to the ground and butchering his family. He could still be cavorting in the ruins with his minions.

Gallowbraid by Carl Critchlow.



The Duelist cover of Volrath, Evincar of Rath, by Kev Walker.